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PLAYS OF TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

THE LOWER DEPTHS

Plays of To-day and To-morrow

DON. By RUDOLF BESIER.

"Mr Besier is a man who can see and think for himself, and constructs as setting for the result of that activity a form of his own. The construction of 'Don' is as daring as it is original"—Mr Max Beerbohm in *The Saturday Review*

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"A magnificent play—at one and the same time a vital and fearless attack on political fraud, and a brilliantly-written strong human drama"—*The Daily Chronicle*

"'The Earth' must conquer every one by its huoyant irony, its pungent delineations, and not least by its rich stores of simple and wholesome moral feeling"—*The Pall Mall Gazette*

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"One of the most delightful productions which the stage has shown us in recent years Mr Besier's work would 'read deliciously, it is literary, it is witty, it is remarkable 'Lady Patricia' is much more than merely a success of laughter It is also a success of literature It is difficult if not impossible, to convey the delicate feeling for words, the quaint, satirical quizzing of Mr Besier of the *précieux*, the dabblers in sentiment, the *poscurs* who form the people of his play"—*The Standard*

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By JEROME K JEROME

"It cannot be denied that Mr Jerome has written an excellent acting play"—*Glasgow Herald*

"There is no caricature of the suffragist, and every type in the play is both carefully and skilfully drawn"—*Aberdeen Free Press*

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(A Play in Three Acts) and **THE CLOD-HOPPER** (An Incredible Comedy)

By S M FOX

"I am inclined to think that we shall hear a great deal of Mr Fox—supposing that Mr Fox writes other plays as clever as 'The Waters of Bitterness,' and supposing that managers think the public clever enough to appreciate them Anyhow his is a strong and bold debut"—Mr Max Beerbohm in *The Saturday Review*

LONDON T FISHER UNWIN
NEW YORK DUFFIELD & CO

~~THE~~
LOWER DEPTHS

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY
MAXIM GORKY

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL RUSSIAN

BY
LAURENCE IRVING

*LONDON. T. FISHER UNWIN,
ADELPHI TERRACE*

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PERSONS IN THE PLAY

MIKHAIL IVANOFF KOSTOLOFF	54 years old	Keeper of a night shelter
-		
VASSILISA KARPOVNA	26	His wife
NATASHA	20	Her sister
MYEDVYEDYEFF	50	Her uncle, a policeman
VASKA PEPEL	28	
ANDREE MITRITCH KLESSHTSH	40	A locksmith
ANNA	30	His wife
NASTIA	24	A street walker
KVASHNYA	A woman under 40	A hawker of meat pies
BOOBNOFF	45	
THE BARON	32	
SATINE	Both of about the same age— under 40	
THE ACTOR		
LUKA	60	A pilgrim
ALYOSHKA	20	A bootmaker
WHEN	Carters	
THE TARTAR		

Several unnamed TATTERED FALIONS who do not speak

The Cast of "The Lower Depths," as it was produced
at the Kingsway Theatre, London, on December
2, 1911

Luka
Vassilisa
Vaska Pepel
Natasha
The Actor
Anna
Satine
Nastya
The Baron
Kvashnya
Boobnoff
Kleeshtsh
Myedvyedyeff
Kostoloff
The Taitar
Alyoshka
When

HOLMAN CLARKE
FRANCES WETHFRALL
O P HEGGIE
JEAN BLOOMFIELD
LEWIS WILLOUGHBY
HAIDEE WRIGHT
HERBERT BUNSTON
LYDIA YAVORSKA
VINCENT CLIVE
CLARE GREET
E H BROOKE
C F COIINGS
ALBAN ATTWOOD
J H BREWFR
IVAN BERLYN
RICHARD NEVILLE
SIDNEY TEVERSHAM

THE FIRST ACT.

THE FIRST ACT

SCENE — *A cave-like cellar The ceiling is arched, grimy, with the plaster peeling off. The light comes from a square window high up in the right wall The right corner is partitioned off with thin boards, it forms PEPER'S room Close to the door of this room are BOOBNOFF'S sleeping-planks In left corner is a large Russian stove, in the stone wall left is the kitchen door, where KVASHNYA, the BARON, and NASTYA live Against the wall, between the stove and the door, is a large bed with dirty print curtains Sleeping-planks around the walls To the front by the left wall is a block of wood with a vice, and an anvil, also another lower block of wood*

(On the lower block KLESSHTSH is seated trying keys into old locks At his feet are two large bundles of miscellaneous keys, strung on wire rings, a battered tin samovar, hammer, and pincers In the middle of the shelter are a large table, two seats, a stool, all dirty and of plain wood KVASHNYA is behind the table attending to the samovar, the BARON is chewing some black bread, and NASTYA

is on the stool, leaning her elbow on the table, reading a tattered book In the bed, behind the curtains, ANNA lies coughing. BOOBNOFF is seated on his planks with an old hat shape between his knees, considering how he shall deal with a pair of unstitched old trousers Scattered about him are a couple of vizors, some pieces of buckram, a rag SATINE has only just gone off to sleep on his planks, he grunts in his sleep The ACTOR, out of sight, tosses about on the stove and coughs)

(It is an early spring morning)

THE BARON

And after !

KVASHNYA

No, says I, no, dearie, just you stow it, says I ,
I've tried it, you see and it's no more
marriages for me !

BOOBNOFF

(To SATINE) Stop that giunting !

KVASHNYA

What for, says I , me a free woman, my own
mistress—what for should I go and give up my
passport and saddle myself with a husband—no !
I wouldn't marry no man—let alone one of them
American Princes, that I wouldn't !

KLESSHTSH

You lie !

KVASHNYA

What-at?

KLESSHTSH

You lie ! You'll marry Abramka

THE BARON

(*Reading the title of the book he has snatched away from NASTYA*) "The Fatal Love" . . .
(*He laughs*)

NASTYA

(*Extending hand*) Give now give it
stop fooling !

(*The BARON flourishes the book in the air*)

KVASHNYA

(*To KLESSHTSH*) You red goat, you—telling
me I lie ! Just don't you dare to give me none of
them coarse words

THE BARON

(*Striking the book on NASTYA'S head*) Nastya,
you little fool !

NASTYA

Give it here.

KLESSHTSH

Quite the fine lady But you'll be married
to Abramka and you know you're just
dying to . . .

KYASHNYA

Aren't you clever ! I just see myself . . . you
as 'as done your wife nearly to death.

KLESSHTSH.

Stop it, you hag ! Tam't no affair of
yours. . .

KVASHNYA

Ah, ha, you can't stand the truth !

THE BARON

They're started Nastya, where are you?

ANNA.

(Putting her head through the curtains.)
Morning at last ! For Heaven's sake don't shout
. . stop quarrelling

KLESSHTSH

Moaning—moaning

ANNA.

Every blessed day Might let me die in
peace.

BOOBNOFF

Noise ain't no 'indrance to dying.

KVASHNYA

(Approaching ANNA) 'Ow yer ever 'ave
managed, you poor soul, to live with such a beast?

ANNA

'Don't . . don't

KVASHNYA

Well, well ! You're such a patient thing . . .
Ain't the chest no easier ?

THE BARON.

Kvashnya ! Time for market

KVASHNYA

Just a second ! (To ANNA) 'Ud yer like
some of my 'ot pies ?

ANNA

No, no thanks Why should I eat ?

KVASHNYA

Must eat 'Ot ones—soothing I'll leave you
some in a cup then when you feel like
it, yer gobble it up ! Come on, Baron
(To KLESSHTSH) Er—you dirty beast !

(Goes into kitchen)

ANNA.

(Coughing) Lord, Lord

THE BARON

(Softly nudging NASTYA'S elbow) Chuck it
. . yer silly !

NASTYA

(Growls) Do go. I let you alone

(THE BARON goes out after KVASHNYA,
whistling.)

SATINE.

(*Sitting up on his planks.*) Can't think who it was that pummelled me yesterday?

BOOBNOFF

Does it matter much 'oo it was?

SATINE.

Leave it at that . But what was it for, though?

BOOBNOFF

Was yer playin' cards?

SATINE.

Played

BOOBNOFF

Well, then, that's 'ow it was .

SATINE.

The blackguards.

THE ACTOR.

(*Raising his head from the stove*) One of these days you'll get such a real pummelling—a pummelling to death

SATINE

Don't talk rot

THE ACTOR.

Why rot?

SATINE.

Because . . a man 'can't die twice over.

THE ACTOR.

(*After a silence.*) What do you mean? How can't he?

KLESSHTSH

Come down off that stove, and sweep up
What are yer shamming there?

THE ACTOR

That's none of your business.

KLESSHTSH.

Wait till Vassilisa comes—she'll soon show yer
yours

THE ACTOR.

Vassilisa can go to the devil It's the Baron's
day to sweep Baron!

(*BARON coming out from the kitchen.*)

THE BARON

I've no time for sweeping . I'm off to
market with Kvashnya

THE ACTOR.

For all I care . . you may be going to jail
. . It's your turn to sweep . and I'm not
on to doing other people's jobs. .

THE BARON

Oh, go to blazes! Let Nastya do it. . . Hi,
you there, fatal love! Buck up! (*Takes book
from NASTYA.*)

NASTYA

(*Getting up*) What now? Give it here ! You puppy ! And you call yerself a gentleman. . .

THE BARON

(*Giving back the book*) Nastya ! You're going to sweep up for me—understood ?

NASTYA

(*Going into kitchen*) Likely indeed
What next !

KVASHNYA

(*To BARON through kitchen door*) Now come on ! They can do it without you . Actor ! you was asked—you do it it won't kill yer !

THE ACTOR.

Yes it's always me I don't see it. . .

(*BARON comes out of kitchen carrying some earthen pots strung on a pole and covered with rags*)

THE BARON

A bit heavy to-day

SATINE.

Fat lot of good being born a Baron, I don't think ! . . .

KVASHNYA.

(*To ACTOR*) Just you be sure and sweep up !
(*Goes off pushing the BARON before her.*)

THE ACTOR.

(*Coming down from stove.*) It's harmful for me to inhale the dust. (*With pride*) My organism is poisoned with alcohol . . . (*Seated meditating on planks*)

SATINE.

Organism . . . organon

ANNA.

Andree Mitritch

KLESSHTSH

Well, what?

ANNA.

Left some pies for me Kvashnya did—you have them

KLESSHTSH

(*Approaching ANNA*) Well, won't you?

ANNA.

No, no . . . Why should I eat? You've to work, you . . . you need it

KLESSHTSH

Frightened? Don't be frightened . . . might get all right . . .

ANNA.

Go and eat! In a bad way . . . all over soon. . .

KLESSHTSH.

Come, come—you never know . . . may pull round . . . such things happen !

(Goes into kitchen.)

THE ACTOR

(Loud, as if he had suddenly woken up.)
Yesterday in the hospital, the doctor he said to me "Your organism," he said, "is thoroughly poisoned with alcohol"

SATINE

(Smiling) Organon.

THE ACTOR.

Not organon—or-ga-nism

SATINE

Sicambri

THE ACTOR

(Waving his hand at him) Oh, rubbish ! I say this, and seriously If the organism is poisoned . why, then it must be harmful for me to sweep the floor—to inhale the dust . . .

SATINE

Macrobistik ha !

THE ACTOR

What are you muttering ?

SATINE.

Words . here's another for you—transcendentalistic. . .

BOOBNOFF.

What does it mean?

SATINE.

Don't know . . . forgotten

BOOBNOFF.

What are you coming at?

SATINE

Just so . . . I'm tired, mate, of all our human
speech . . . all of our words . . . I'm sick of 'em
I've heard 'em every single one . . . at least a
thousand times . . .

THE ACTOR.

In the play of "Hamlet" they say "Words,
words, words!" It's a good piece . . . I
played the grave-digger . . .

(KLESSHTSH coming from the kitchen)

KLESSHTSH

Let's see how you play with that broom

THE ACTOR

Keep to your own business . . . *(Strikes his
chest)* Ophelia! O . . . think of me in thy
prayers!

*(In the distance is heard a dull murmur,
cries, and a police whistle KLESSHTSH
sits down to his work, and scrapes away
with a file.)*

SATINE.

I love difficult, rare words When I was a
little chap I was in a telegraph office . .
read a heap of books . . .

BOOBNOFF.

Did you work the telegraph?

SATINE

I did There are some very good books
 . and quantities of curious words I've
received an education see?

BOOBNOFF

You don't let one forget it! Much good it'd
done yer! Now I—I was a fur-dyer . had
a place of my own 'ands all yaller—with
the dye dyed 'em this and dyed 'em that 'ands
all yaller right up to the elbows! "Well," I
thought, "I shall never get 'em clean in this
world I shall just die with these 'ere yaller
'ands " But look at 'em now, there's only
dirt on 'em nothing else

SATINE

Well, what of it?

BOOBNOFF

That's just all about it .

SATINE

What are you talking about?

BOOBNOFF.

Just so . . . just comparing . . . It shows
yer whatever you does to the outside it all comes
off . . . it all comes off, ay, ay

SATINE

Ah my bones are aching !

THE ACTOR

(*Seated nursing his knee*) Education's bosh,
the great thing is talent I knew an actor .
had to spell out his parts, but he played heroes in
a way that why, the theatre would just rock
with the delight of the audiences

SATINE

Boobnoff, lend us five kopyeks?

BOOBNOFF

All I have's two

THE ACTOR

I say to play heroes you must have
talent And talent's just belief in yourself, in
your own powers

SATINE

Give me five kopyeks and I'll have belief in
you , I'll believe you a hero, a crocodile, a police
inspector . Klesshtsh, five kopyeks !

KLESSHTSH

Go to hell ! The whole pack of you !

SATINE.

What are you cursing at? You haven't got a stiver in the world—I know yer!

ANNA

Andree Mitritch I'm choking . I
can't breathe!

KLESSHTSH

What can I do?

BOOBNOFF

Open the passage door!

KLESSHTSH

Thanks Nice for you up there, I've to be
on the floor if I was in your place I'd say
"Open it" I'm cold enough without no
door open

BOOBNOFF

It wasn't for me it was for yer wife

KLESSHTSH

(*Sulkily*) Makes no odds who it's for

SATINE

My head's all buzzing Eh why
must people be thumping each other's heads?

BOOBNOFF.

Not only each other's heads, but all over each
other's 'ole bodies (Gets up) Goin' to buy

some thread they're late in showin' up to-day our losses !

(Goes out)

(ANNA coughs SATINE lies motionless, with his hands folded behind his head)

THE ACTOR

(After a melancholy look round, approaching ANNA) Feeling bad, eh ?

ANNA

the choking

THE ACTOR

Would you like to go out into the passage ? Up you get, then (*He helps her to rise, pulls a kind of shawl round her shoulders, and supports her towards the passage*) Ay—ay it's a job I'm ill myself—poisoned with alcohol

(KOSTOLOFF in doorway)

KOSTOLOFF

Having a stroll ?

*Here's a very pretty pair,
Gallant knight and lady fair*

THE ACTOR

Get on one side there way for the invalids !

KOSTOLOFF

Pass out, pass out ' (*He hums an anthem*)

tune, glances round suspiciously, and inclines his head to the L as if he were listening for something in PEPEL'S room)

(Exeunt ACTOR and ANNA)

(KLESSHTSH is jangling his keys and scraping away with his file)

How you squeak !

KLESSHTSH

What d'you say ?

KOSTOLOFF

I say you squeak *(Pause)* Er . There was something I wanted to ask you *(Quick and low)* Wife not been here ?

KLESSHTSH

Ain't seen her

KOSTOLOFF

(Carefully approaching the door of PEPEL'S room) It's a lot of room that you take up for your rouble a month The bed and then where you sit hum, yes ! Five roubles' worth of room as Heaven's above us I shall have to stick you on half a rouble

KLESSHTSH

You'd put a rope round my neck, and strangle me . You're near the grave, and you think of nothing but half-roubles .

KOSTOLOFF

Why strangle you? What were the use of that?
Live in the Lord, live and prosper But I
shall have to stick you on half a rouble—'ave to
buy oil for the sacred lamp that it may
burn before the Holy Ikons in atonement of my
sins . And my sins will be forgiven me,
and yours too Your sins you don't think about
no, verily Oh, Andrushka, you are
a wicked man! Your wife is perishing through
your wickedness no one loves you, nor
esteems you your work is squeaky, dis-
turbng to everybody

KLESSHTSH

What do you come here for—baiting me?

(SATINE gives a loud growl)

KOSTOLOFF

(With a start) Lord, there's a noise for
you . .

(The ACTOR entering)

THE ACTOR

I've sat her down in the passage, and wrapped
her up.

KOSTOLOFF

Here's what I call a real good fellow There
are good deeds They shall all be paid back
to you

THE ACTOR.

When?

KOSTOLOFF

In the other world, my boy there all,
every one of our acts, they shall all be reckoned
up. . . .

THE ACTOR

Suppose you were to reward me for my goodness
down here . . .

KOSTOLOFF

How can I do that?

THE ACTOR

Wipe out half my debt

KOSTOLOFF

He—he ! You are always joking, my dear boy,
—always poking fun Is the goodness of
the heart to be paid for in money? Goodness—
is above all other gifts But your debt to me—
that is your debt to me And accordingly
you should pay me back Doing me good
for its own sake, to me, who am an old man

THE ACTOR

Old man—you old rogue ! . . .

(Goes into the kitchen)

*(KLESSHTSH gets up and goes into the
passage)*

KOSTOLOFF

• The squeaker—he's hooked it He—he ! He
has no love for me .

SATINE

Who but the Devil does love you?

KOSTOLOFF.

Oh, you've a bad tongue ! Yet I love all of you I see that you are my poor, down-trodden, useless, fallen brothers . (Suddenly and rapidly) And Vaska . . is he at home?

SATINE

Look .

(Going to the door and knocking at it)
Vaska !

(THE ACTOR appears at the kitchen door, chewing something)

PEPEL.

Who is it?

KOSTOLOFF

It's me me, Vaska !

PEPEL

What d'you want?

KOSTOLOFF

(Bawling back) Open !

SATINE

(Without looking at KOSTOLOFF) He opens, and there she'll be

(THE ACTOR makes a grimace)

KOSTOLOFF

(Low, anxiously) Eh? Who'll be there ?
What do you mean?

30 . THE LOWER DEPTHS

SATINE.

What's that? Are you asking me?

KOSTOLOFF

What did you say?

SATINE.

I was just talking to myself

KOSTOLOFF

Look here, my friend! Don't get too funny
see! (*Bangs on the door*) Vassili!

PEPEL

(*Opening door*) Now, then? What's up?

KOSTOLOFF

(*Looking into the room*) I you see
. you

PEPEL

'Ave yer brought the money?

KOSTOLOFF

I wanted to tell you

PEPEL

Where is—the money?

KOSTOLOFF

What money?

PEPEL

Why, the seven roubles for the watch—now?

KOSTOLOFF.

What watch, Vaska? What a fellow you are!

PEPEL

You're a good 'un! Yesterday, before witnesses, I sold you a ticker for ten roubles three I had—the seven—fork it up! What are yer blinking for? You prowl about waking people up . . . and now you don't know yourself what you're after

KOSTOLOFF.

Sh—sh ! Don't get angry, Vaska The
watch, you see—it was .

PEPEL

Stolen .

KOSTOLOFF

(*Sternly*) I receive no stolen goods
that you should think—

PEPEL

(Taking him by the shoulder) Now, what did you disturb me for? What is it you want?

KOSTOLOFF

I don't want—nothing I'll be off—if
you're going to

PEPEL

Be off, and bring the money !

KOSTOLOFF

A dreadful surly lot ! Who ever did !
(Goes off)

THE ACTOR.

It's a farce they're playing.

SATINE

Good I like farce . .

PEPEL

What was he after, eh?

SATINE.

(*Smiling*) You don't know? He's after his wife why don't you settle him, Vaska?

PEPEL

Risk my life for a thing like that .

SATINE

You're a sharp lad. Then—why shu'd marry Vassilisa and become our boss

PEPEL

You are good ! Why, you'd just fatten on me ; I'm a soft-hearted fool, you'd drink away every farthing I had (*Sits on the planks*) The old devil woke me up I was having a fine dream , I was fishing, I'd caught a prodigious bream ! Never saw such a one out of a dream There I had him on my hook, and I was just dreading—" the line'll snap ! " I'd just got out the gaff and I was thinking to myself, now in a moment

SATINE.

That weren't no bream, it was Vassilisa. . .

THE ACTOR.

He hooked Vassilisa long ago .

PEPEL.

(*Angrily*) You can all go to the devil
and you can take her with you !

(*KLESSHTSH coming out of the passage*)

KLESSHTSH

Cold . devilish cold

THE ACTOR .

Have you left Anna out there? She'll
freeze

KLESSHTSH

Natasha 'as taken 'er with 'er into the
kitchen

THE ACTOR

The old man'll put her out

KLESSHTSH

(*Sitting down to his work*) Hum
Natasha'll see to her

SATINE

Vaska ! Let's have five kopeys .

THE ACTOR

You you and your five kopeys . .
Give us twenty kopeys •

PEPEL

I'd best hurry up or you'll be wantin' a
rouble There !

SATINE

Gee-bral-tar-r ! Crooks are the best folk in
the world

KLESSHTSH

(*Grumbling*) Their money's easily come by
they don't work

SATINE

Heaps come by their money easily, there's
precious few to part with it easily Work?
You make your work so that it's pleasant to me,
and I don't say I won't work I might !
When your work's a pleasure, life's jolly then
When it's a toil, a duty, then life's slavery ! (*To*
the ACTOR) Here, Sardanapalus ! Come
on

THE ACTOR

Come on, Nebuchadnezzar ! I'm going to swill
it down like forty thousand drunkards

(*They go out*)

PEPEL

(*Yawning*) Well, and 'ow's yer wife?

KLESSHTSH

She ain't for long (*Pause*)

PEPEL

Yer know I look at you—there's no good in all
that scraping

KLESSHTSH.

What should I do?

PEPEL

Nothing

KLESSHTSH

'Ow should I live?

PEPEL

People manage

KLESSHTSH

Them? Call them people? Rabble, muck—
people! I'm a working man I'm ashamed
even to look at 'em I've worked since I was
a child D'you think I shan't get clear of
all this? I shall, if I leaves all my skin behind
me just you wait my wife, she'll die

I've been here six months, but it seems
more like six years

PEPEL

There's no one here any worse than you
say what yer like

KLESSHTSH

No worse! They 'aven't no honour nor no
conscience

PEPEL

(*Indifferently*) Much good of them—honour,
conscience! Can you get 'em on to your feet in-

stead of boots—honour and conscience? Honour and conscience does mighty well for them as 'as the power and the strength . .

BOOBNOFF

(*Re-entering*) Ooh ! bitter

PEPEL

Boobnoff ! Got a conscience?

BOOBNOFF

What for? A conscience?

PEPEL

That's just it

BOOBNOFF

What 'ud I do with a conscience? I ain't no rich man

PEPEL.

That's what I say honour and conscience they're for the rich, yes ! Here's Klesshtsh lettin' it into us , says we ain't no consciences

BOOBNOFF

Why, is 'e wantin' to borrow some?

PEPEL

'E 'as 'is own supply

BOOBNOFF

Oh, then 'e's sellin' off Won't find no market here Now, if it was old cardboard I'd take some of it on account ' .

PEPEL.

(*Didactically.*) You are an ass, Andruishka !
Just you let Satine talk to you about consciences
or try the Baron

KLESSHTSH.

D'you think I'd talk to sich I

PEPEL

They've better 'eads than yours for all
their drinking

BOOBNOFF

*'E that can be drunk and wise
'E's a man a man should prize*

PEPEL

Satine says, every man wants a conscience in
his neighbour, but 'e says, no man wants one in
'isself and that's a fact

(*NATASHA comes in After her, LUKA with
a staff, a pack over his shoulder, a
kettle and a teapot at his waist*)

LUKA

Give you good-day, honest people !

PEPEL

(*Twisting his moustache*) Ah, Natasha !

BOOBNOFF

(*To LUKA*) I was honest up to last spring
year . . .

NATASHA.

See, here's a new room-mate. . . .

LUKA.

Oh, it's all one to me ! Sharpers—I respect 'em, too There's no two sorts for me , all just fleas . all little black fellows all hopping about tha-t's the way Show me, dearie, where shall I squeeze myself ?

NATASHA

(*Pointing to kitchen door*) Go over there, daddy

LUKA

Thanks, girlie dear ! It's all just a place Where the old man's warm, there the old man's happy

PEPEL

A wonderful little old boy that you've brought us, Natasha

NATASHA

A sight more interestin' than you Andree ! We've got yer wife in the kitchen just you come and fetch 'er

KLESSHTSH

Right I'm coming

NATASHA.

And you might try and be kinder to 'er. . . .
She hasn't much longer ' .

KLESSHTSH.

I know. . . .

NATASHA.

You know . . . There's no good in knowing,
the thing is to do . . . Ah, it's a fearful thing to
die.

PEPEL

See me . . . I'm not afraid . . .

NATASHA

Oh, you're a marvel, aren't you?

BOOBNOFF

(*Whistling*) Um . . . sticky thread . . .

PEPEL

God's truth, I'm not afraid! This very
moment—I'm ready to die . . . Take a knife, plunge
it into my heart . . . I'll die—without a sound
And gladly, too, for I should fall by a pure
hand

NATASHA

(*Going out*) Keep your soft soap for them
as likes it

BOOBNOFF

Um . . . sticky . . . sticky

NATASHA

(*By the passage door*) Don't forget, Andru-
ishka, about your wife .

KLESSHTSH.

All right !

PEPEL

There's a fine girl !

BOOBNOFF.

Ay, the girl's all right

PEPEL

Why's she so short with me? Why? Ah, well,
she's bound to come to grief here

BOOBNOFF

You'll bring her to grief

PEPEL

What do you mean—I? I'm sorry for her

BOOBNOFF

Like the wolf for the lamb .

PEPEL

You liar ! I *am* right down sorry for her. . .
She 'as a 'ard life 'ere I see

KLESSHTSH

Wait till Vassilisa spots you gabbing with
her. . .

BOOBNOFF

Vassilisa? M'yes, she ain't one to let 'er own
go . . . She's a fierce woman . . .

PEPEL.

(*Lying on the planks*) Go to the devil . . .
yer croakers !

KLESSHTSH.

You'll see—wait a bit !

(*LUKA from the kitchen, singing :*)

*Through the night we trudge along,
Dark as night is all around .*

KLESSHTSH

O Lord ! another shouter

PEPEL

I'm bored Why do I get this boredom ?
All's going along well Then all of a sudden,
yer kind of dry up and it all gets tiresome

BOOBNOFF

Tiresome ? Hum

PEPEL

Ay—ay

LUKA

(*Sings*)

All the road is dark before

PEPEL.

Old man ! Hi !

(*LUKA appearing in the door*)

LUKA

Call me?

PEPEL.

Don't sing !

LUKA

You don't like it?

PEPEL

When it is good singing, I like it .

LUKA

That's to say, then, mine isn't good?

PEPEL

You've hit it

LUKA

There now ! I *did* think I could sing That's just always the way a man he goes along thinking now this is something I *can* do And suddenly folks seem not to care for it

PEPEL

(*Smiling*) Yes, that's the way

BOOBNOFF

Say you're bored, and now you're laughing . .

, PEPEL.

Let me alone, you crow .

LUKA.

Who is it says they're bored?

PEPEL

Me here

(Re-enter the BARON)

LUKA

There now ! There's a girlie there in the kitchen, sitting there, and reading a book, and she's crying ! That she is ! The tears are flowing I says to her, " Why, my pet, what is it all, eh ? " " Oh," she says, " it's so sad ! " " What is it," I says, " that's sad ? " " Here," she says, " in the book " And that's how people pass their time, eh ? It's all from this boredom

THE BARON

That's girl's a fool

PEPEL

Baron ! Had your tea ?

THE BARON

Had it. What then ?

PEPEL.

What d'you say—'ud you like me to stand yer half a bottle ?

THE BARON

What do *you* think ! . . . What then?

PEPEL.

Go down on all fours, and bark like a dog !

THE BARON

Fool ! What are yer talking about? Are yer drunk?

PEPEL

Bark—go on ! That'll amuse me you're
a gentleman There was a time you thought
yourself better than your brother man and
all the rest of it

THE BARON.

Well, what then?

PEPEL

What ! Why now I make you bark like a dog,
and you've got to do it—are yer going to?

THE BARON

And if I do And where's your gain if you
do know that I've fallen even below you? You
made me go an all fours when I was above you

BOORNOFF

That's true !

LUKA

It's true, and it's good. . . .

BOOBNOFF.

What was, was ; what's left's all nothing . . .
There's no difference here. . We're all of us
level ; nothing but the bare, naked man. . .

LUKA

That means all are equal . But tell me,
dearie, have you been a Baron ?

THE BARON

What is it ? Is it a spectre ?

LUKA

(*Laughs*) Counts I've seen, and I've seen
princes but a baron—the first that I ever
saw, and this only a damaged one

PEPEL

(*Laughing*) That's up against you, Baron

THE BARON

We live and learn, Vassili

LUKA

Hey—hey. When I look around, my
lads Your way of life .

BOOBNOFF

Our way of life is uproar commencin' from
daybreak. . . .

THE BARON

We've some of us lived better. . . . Yes! I, in my time, have lain in bed of a morning and drunk my coffee . . . coffee!—with cream. . . .
Ay!

LUKA

But all of us—are all men! You can pretend all you like, and give yourself all the airs, but a man were you born, and a man you have to die . . . And I see, for all folks gets wiser and busier . . . and though they live worse and worse . . . they've the will to live better the stiff-necks!

THE BARON

What are you, old 'un? Where are you from?

LUKA

What? I?

THE BARON

A tramp?

LUKA

Tramps we are all . . . And they say now, as I'm told, this whole earth is a tramp in the skies

THE BARON

(*Severely*) Maybe it is, but—have you a passport?

LUKA.

(*After a slight pause.*) And what are you, then—an informer?

PEPEL.

(*Delighted*) Had 'im, old 'un ! How do you feel now, Baron?

BOOBNOFF.

Um—yes, that was one for the gentleman

THE BARON

(*Taken aback*) What d'yer mean?
Why, I was only joking, old man ! I haven't got any papers myself

BOOBNOFF

Now you're lying

THE BARON

Oh, well I've got some papers . . .
but none that are good for anything

LUKA

But those papers are all the same they're
none of them good for anything

PEPEL

Baron, let's go to the trakter

THE BARON

Right ! Well, goodbye, old man . . . you're
a rascal !

LUKA.

Tell me who isn't, friend . .

PEPEL.

(*By passage door*) Well, come along !

(*Goes out, the BARON rapidly following.*)

LUKA

Is it true that that man was a Baron?

BOOBNOFF

Who can say? A gentleman 'e 'as been .
It comes out every now and then You can see
he hasn't got rid of it yet

LUKA

Ay, to be sure, this gentility it's like the small-
pox a man may get over it, but it leaves
its marks .

BOOBNOFF

He's right enough though every now and
then breaks out a bit like he did about
your passport

(*ALYOSHKA enters, drunk, with a concertina, whistling*)

ALYOSHKA,

Hey, boys !

BOOBNOFF.

What are you bawling for ?

ALYOSHA

I beg pardon . . . ask your forgiveness ! I'm
a well-bred man . . .

BOOBNOFF

On another jag ?

ALYOSHA

Many as you like ! This moment the Inspector Myedvyedeff 'e's just thrown me out of the station , 'e said " See," says he, " that you keep out of the streets " that's all . . . I am a man of character . . . My master 'e sneers at me. What is 'e 'imself—my master ? Fi-! ! 'E's an idiot—a drunkard, my master is ! . . . But I'm just such a man that wants nothing ! I wish for nothing and—that's flat ! You say—here's twenty roubles ! But I—I don't want nothing . . . A straight chap like me to 'ave my mate set over me, and a drunkard . . . Won't stand it, won't 'ave it !

(NASTYA comes out of the kitchen)

'Ere's a million—d-d-don't want it

(NASTYA stands in the door shaking her
head at ALYOSHA)

LUKA.

(Good-naturedly) Ay, lad, you've got a bit
mixed up. . .

BOOBNOFF

What fools men are ! . . .

ALYOSHKA.

(*Lying on the floor*) Well, eat me. For I—
I want nothing I am a wretched man. Show
me how I'm worse—why am I worse than others?
Show me? Myedvyedyeff says, "Keep off the
streets or I'll bash in your mug" And I—I
go and lie down right in the middle of the street
—crush me Nothing—I want nothing!

NASTYA

Poor fellow such a kid and now
already come to this

ALYOSHKA

(*On his knees before her*) Lady
me'mselle ! Parle français price-current ! Been
on the spree

NASTYA

(*In a loud whisper*) Vassilisa !

(*VASSILISA opening the door sharply*)

VASSILISA

(*To ALYOSHKA*) You here again?

ALYOSHKA

Good-day don't be 'arsh . . .

VASSILISA

Puppy, I told you to keep your carcase out of
here . . . and now you've come back !

ALYOSHKA.

Vassilisa Karpovna . . would you like me to
play you a funeral march?

VASSILISA.

(Seizing him by the shoulder) Clear out !

ALYOSHKA.

Stop ! That's not the way ! Funeral march
just learnt it ! Real music Stop !
that's not the way !

VASSILISA

I'll teach you . what's the way I'll
'ave the 'ole street on you you dirty tattler
you cub, to dare go tattling about me

ALYOSHKA

Well, I'm going

VASSILISA

(To BOOBNOFF) Never you let him set foot
in 'ere D'you hear me?

BOOBNOFF

I am't your watchman here

VASSILISA.

It's nothing to me what you are ! You're here
out of charity—don't forget it How much do
you owe me?

BOOBNOFF

(*Calmly*) Never reckoned. . . .

VASSILISA

I'll reckon for you !

ALYOSHKA

(*Opens door and shouts out*) Vassilisa
Karpovna ! I'm not afraid of you—n-n-not
afraid !

(*Disappears.*)

(LUKA *laughs*)

VASSILISA

Well, what are you ?

LUKA

A wayfarer . . . a bird of passage. .

VASSILISA

For the night or to stop ?

LUKA

I'll look round

VASSILISA

Passport !

LUKA

Well, yes

VASSILISA

Come on !

LUKA.

I'll fetch it . it'll arrive with the rest of my luggage

VASSILISA

A bird of passage eh? A jail-bird 'ud be nearer the truth

LUKA.

(*With a sigh*) Um, you're not gentle, mother

(*VASSILISA goes to the door of PEPEL'S room, ALYOSHA looks out from the kitchen*)

ALYOSHA

(*Whispering*) Has she gone, eh?

VASSILISA

(*Turning on him*) You still here?

(*ALYOSHA gives a whistle and disappears*)

(*NASTYA and LUKA laugh*)

BOOBNOFF

(*To VASSILISA*) 'E ain't there

VASSILISA

Who?

BOOBNOFF.

Vaska.

VASSILISA

Did I ask if he was?

BOOBNOFF

I saw you was looking all about . . .

VASSILISA.

I was looking if things was straight, d'yer see? Why's the room not swept out yet? 'Ow often have I told you it's to be kept clean?

BOOBNOFF

It's the actor's turn

VASSILISA

Don't care whose turn Suppose the inspectors come along and put a fine on me then it's out you get, all of you!

BOOBNOFF

(*Calmly.*) Then what will you live by?

VASSILISA

I'll have none of this litter (*Goes into the kitchen To NASTYA*) What's up with you? What's your face all swelled up for? Clean the floor! Natasha—have you seen her? 'As she been here?

NASTYA

Don't know 'aven't seen her

VASSILISA

And he has He¹ been home?

BOOBNOFF.

Vassilisi? Yes . . . Natasha, she was here talking to Klesshtsh, she was. . .

VASSILISA

Did I ask you who she was talking to? Dirt everywhere . . . filth! Ah, yes—pigs! Clean it all up . . . d'you hear!

(Goes out rapidly)

BOOBNOFF

That's a wild beast of a woman!

LUKA

She's a serious lady

NASTYA

It's the life that's made her a beast .
Any one as was tied to a husband like
hers . . .

BOOBNOFF

- Come, she don't let the tyin' worry her

LUKA.

Does she always rage around like that?

BOOBNOFF.

Always. Then, you see, she came after
'er lover, and 'e wasn't 'ere

LUKA.

And that put her out, of course. Oh-ho-ho !
How all sorts of people on this earth is putting
things in order ! And with all sorts of punish-
ments, all punishing one another . . . and yet
there's no order in life . . . and there's no
cleanness.

BOOBNOFF

Everybody likes things in order but some
'asn't brains enough. Still, for this cleaning-up—
Nastya you see to it .

NASTYA.

I see myself ! D'yer think I'm yer servant ?
(*After a silence*) I shall get drunk to-day !

BOOBNOFF

That's—flat !

LUKA.

Why, what d'you want to drink for, girle ?
A moment back you were crying , now you say
“ I'll get drunk ! ”

NASTYA

(*Loud*) I'll drink, and then I'll cry again
. . . and that's all !

BOOBNOFF

It's not much

LUKA.

But what for?—tell me that. Every pimple has a reason for it. . .

(NASTYA remains silent, shaking her head)

So ah-ha! the race of men! What's to be made of it? . . Well, then, say that I was to sweep up Where do you keep the broom?

BOOBNOFF

Behind the door in the passage

(LUKA goes into the passage)

Nastya !

NASTYA

Well?

BOOBNOFF

Why did Vassilisa go for Alyoshka?

NASTYA.

'E said that Vaska was sick of 'er, and wanted to chuck 'er and take on with Natasha
 I shall leave here and go somewhere else. . .

BOOBNOFF

Why? Where?

NASTYA.

I'm sick of it I'm not wanted here. .

BOOBNOOF.

You're not wanted anywhere . . . and none of all the people on earth—there's none of 'em wanted . . .

(NASTYA shakes her head. Gets up, and goes slowly out into the passage)

(MYEDVYEDYEFF comes in, LUKA after him with a broom)

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Seems to me I don't know you

LUKA

And all the other people, do you know them all?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

I have to know every one in my ward . . . but here's you—I don't know—

LUKA

Now the cause of that, daddy, is that the whole world doesn't lie in your ward . . . there's just a leetle piece outside of it

(Goes into kitchen)

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(Over to BOOBNOFF) It's true my ward's not a big one . . . but it's worse than the big ones . . . just now, as I was comin' off duty I 'ad to run in Alyoshka, the bootmaker . . . 'E was

right in the middle of the road, with his concertina, and bellowin' " I want nothing—I want nothing ! " Horses goin' and all the traffic—might get run over and so on . 'E's a wild lad . . so I just took him by the collar Very fond of giving trouble

BOOBNOFF

'Er yer comin' to play draughts to-night?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Coming? M-yes What about Vaska?

BOOBNOFF

Nothing . . same as usual

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Means . he's getting along?

BOOBNOFF

Why shouldn't he get along? He's able to get along

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Doubtfully*) Able to?

(LUKA goes into the passage with a bucket in his hand)

M-yes . there's a sort of talk . about Vaska . . ain't yer heard?

BOOBNOFF

I've 'eard all sorts of talk . . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

But about Vaska? Ain't yer noticed?

BOOBNOFF

What?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Why in general Maybe yer know
and you're lying? Why everybody knows . .
(*Sternly*) Let's 'ave no lies, brother!

BOOBNOFF

What should I lie for?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

So so . . ah, come! They say that
Vaska and Vassilisa what's it to me? I am
not her father, I'm her uncle It can't make
me look silly

(KVASHNYA *comes in*)

But there's a kind of people sprung up who wants
to make every one look silly Ah, so there
you are . .

KVASHNYA

Boobnoff! Hey, my gallant sentinel! Again
in the market he asked me to marry him. . . .

BOOBNOFF.

Well, and what then? 'E's got money, and 'e's a sturdy fellow yet. . . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

What, I? Ho-ho !

KVASHNYA

You old grizzle pate ! Let be, it's my sore point I've tried it once, duckie—for a woman to marry it's like throwin' yerself down a 'ole in the ice—when you've done it once, yer never forget it . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Now wait a bit there are husbands of all sorts

KVASHNYA

I'm always one and the same When my beloved old man breathed his last, may I never 'ave a roof over my 'ead, if I didn't just sit up for joy a whole day and night sat and simply couldn't believe in my happiness .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

If your 'usband beat yer why, you should have complained to the police

KVASHNYA

I complained to God for seven years . it 'elped none !

MYEDVYEDYEFF.

Nowadays it's forbidden to beat your wife . . .
all in these days is strict, according to law . . .
and order ! No one is to be beaten wrongfully,
all the beating's to be done to keep order

(LUKA *leads in* ANNA)

LUKA

Slow but sure so here we are Fancy
leaving her to go alone when she's so weak?
Which is your place?

ANNA

(*Pointing*) Thanks, dear old man

KVASHNYA

She's got a 'usband look !

LUKA

The poor soul's in quite a weak state
She creeps along the passage, feeling for the
walls, and groaning Why do yer leave 'er by
'erself ?

KVASHNYA

'Adn't noticed, daddy—pardon us ! 'Er maid,
you see, 'as just gone out for a stroll

LUKA

So now you're making fun . but 'ow
can one neglect a 'uman creature so ? Whoever
it is, all of us is of value. .

MYEDVYEDYEFF.

Supervision there must be ! Suddenly—say she dies? Then there's no end of bother. .
Watch must be kept !

LUKA.

True, Mr. Sergeant . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

M-yes though I'm I'm not quite a
sergeant yet

LUKA

Not? The bearing's so very heroic !

*(Noise and scuffling in the passage Loud
cries)*

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Oh, not—not a row?

BOOBNOFF

Sounds like it.

KVASHNYA

Go and look

MYEDVYEDYEFF

There, I've got to go Ah, the service !
And why part people when they fight? They'll

stop of themselves . . . yer bound to stop fighting . . . if they was left to fight it out in peace . . . why, they'd fight less, because they'd not forget it so easy.

BOOBNOFF.

(*Getting off his planks*) Must speak to your superiors about it

(KOSTOLOFF *cries out, throwing open the door*)

KOSTOLOFF

Abraham ! Come . Vassilisa, ' Natasha
she's killing her come !

(KVASHNYA, MYEDVYEDYEFF, BOOBNOFF
rush into the passage LUKA *looks after them, shaking his head*)

ANNA

O Lord ! poor little Natasha !

LUKA

Who is it fighting ?

ANNA

The mistress with her sister.

LUKA

(*Coming to ANNA*) What's to be done ?

ANNA

Well, they've both food enough . . and health . . .

LUKA

And you—what is your name?

ANNA

Anna	It seems to me	you look
like my father	my dear father	gentle
like him .	and mild	.

LUKA.

It's the knocks I've 'ad, they've made me gentle
(*Laughs with a grating laugh*)

END OF THE FIRST ACT

THE SECOND ACT

THE SECOND ACT

SCENE —*Same scene Night*

(On the planks round about the stove SATINE, BARON, WHEN, and the TARTAR are playing at cards KLESSHTSH and the ACTOR are watching the game BOOBNOFF, on his planks, is playing draughts with MYEDVYEDYFFF LUKA is seated on a stool by ANNA'S bed The shelter is lighted by two lamps one on the wall by the card-players, the other on BOOBNOFF'S planks

THE TARTAR

One more game—then I stop

BOOBNOFF

When ! Sing ! *(He sings)*

The sun it rises and it sets

WHEN

(Harmonising)

In my prison darkness reigns

THE TARTAR

(To SATINE) Shuffle ! Shuffle well ! We know you, yer know

WHEN *and* BOOBNOFF

(Together)

*Day and night the warders go,
Pacing underneath my window.*

ANNA

Yells abuse nothing else have I
seen nothing besides

LUKA

There, missus, don't fret f

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Look out, where are yer moving?

BOENOFF

Ah ! yes, yes, yes

THE TARTAR

(Threatening SATINE with his fist) Why er
yer trying to hide a card? I see yer yer
beauty!

WHEN

Chuck it, Hassan! They're sure to skin us.
Boobnoff, strike up!

ANNA.

I can't remember when I wasn't hungry
I've trembled all my life . . . Dreaded . . . I
shouldn't get no more to eat . . . been in rags
all my life . . . all my wretched life . . .
why, why?

LUKA.

There, there, darling ! You're tired Never
mind

THE ACTOR.

(To WHEN) Play the Knave—the Knave,
damn yer !

THE BARON

We 'ave the King

KLESSHTSH

They win every time

SATINE

It's a way er 'ave . . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Crown him !

BOOBNOFF

And I um-m .

ANNA

I'm dying

KLESSHTSH

Just look at 'em ! Prince, you chuck it !
Chuck it, I tell yer !

THE ACTOR

You let him alone

Look out, Andruiska, that I don't give you a damned hiding!

One game more The pitcher goes to the well so often it gets broken at last.

(KLESSHTSH, with a shake of his head,
moves over to BOOBNOFF)

I'm always thinking Oh! Lord, can it be that in the other world, too, I shall have to suffer? Not there as well?

There won't be nothing! Lie and listen!
Nothing! You'll have rest there A little
more patience All, dearie, they all suffer
each in his own way (*Gets up with
quick steps*)

(Goes into the kitchen)

(Sings.)

Take your gun, and have some fun .

I'm not going to run away

(Together.)

*Longing, longing to be free,
But my chains I cannot break . .*

THE TARTAR

(*Shouts out*) That card was in your sleeve

THE BARON

(*Confused*) Do you want me to ram it under your nose?

THE ACTOR

(*Positively*) Prince, you're wrong never, never in this world

THE TARTAR

Saw it ! Sharper ! I'll play no more !

SATINE

(*Gathering up the cards*) Hassan, go and shake yourself yer know we were sharpers Then why did yer play with us ?

THE BARON

I've won forty kopeks, and you shriek as if you were beggared come, one more !

THE TARTAR

(*Hotly*) Then play straight

SATINE

What for ?

THE TARTAR

How "What for?"

SATINE

Just so what for ?

THE TARTAR

Well, don't yer know?

SATINE

I don't know Der you?

(The TARTAR spits viciously All laugh at him)

WHEN

(Good-naturedly) You're green, Hassan !
Can't you see ! If they was to begin living
honestly, why, in three days they'd starve

THE TARTAR

That's nothing to me ! They must live
honestly !

WHEN

Keep it now ! Better go and 'ave some tea
Boobnoff ! And

Oh, my chains, my heavy chains

BOOBNOFF.

Oh, my heavy clanking chains

WHEN

Come along, Hassanka ! *(Goes out singing)*
Tease me not, and I'll not beat yer

*(TARTAR threatens the BARON with his fist,
and goes out after his companion.)*

SATINE.

(*Smiling to BARON*) You, your mightiness,
you came another cropper! You've had an edu-
cation, but yer can't palm a card

THE BARON

(*Hands apart*) Devil knows how it hap-
pened

THE ACTOR

No talent no belief in yourself
without that no good ever

MYEDVYEDYEFF

I've one King and you've two
m-yes!

BOOBNOFF

One's good enough, if he's a brainy one
on yer go!

KLESSHTSH

Er yer winning, Abra'm Ivanitch?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

None of your business d'yer see? So
shut yer mouth

SATINE

Fifty-three kopyeks in

THE ACTOR

Three kopyeks for me though what do
I want with three kopyeks?

LUKA.

(*Coming out of kitchen*) Well, so you've cleared out the Tartar? Going to have a glass now?

THE BARON

Come along with us

SATINE

Let's see what yer like drunk

LUKA

No better than I am sober

THE ACTOR

Come along, old man I'll recite to
yer

LUKA

What ever's that?

THE ACTOR

Verses—understand?

LUKA

Verses ! What do I want with verses?

THE ACTOR

They're amusing sometimes they're
sad .

SATINE

Hi, recitationist, er yer coming?

(*Goes out with BARON*)

THE ACTOR.

Coming . I'll catch yer up ! Now, for
instance, here's a bit out of one poem, old man

The beginning I've forgotten clean
forgotten ! . . . (*Strikes his forehead*)

BOOBNOFF

There ! I've taken yer king on you go !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

If I'd gone there, you'd 'ave 'ad 'im

THE ACTOR

In the past, before I was poisoned with alcohol,
I had a fine study, old man But now you
see It's all up, brother ! All up with me
I used to give that poem with enormous success
 thunder of applause You—you don't know
how it feels—applause why, brother, it's like
vodka ! I'd come on stand like this
 stand like this and (*Silence*) Can't
remember a thing not a word can't
remember ! Used to love that piece in a bad
way, eh, old 'un ?

LUKA

There can't be no good in fergettin' what yer
loved Where yer love there's all yer soul

THE ACTOR

I've drunk my soul, old man I'm lost,
brother Lost how ? Hadn't no belief
. . . I'm done with

LUKA.

No! Why? You . . . you can be cured!
In these days they cure people of drunkenness—
fact! Cure them, brother, fer nothin'. . .
There's a 'ospital been built for drunkards . .
and they cure 'em fer nothin'. . . It's recog-
nised, yer see, that a drunkard's a man, too,
and when 'e wants to be cured, they rejoice at
'im! So stir up and be off

THE ACTOR

(*Reflectively*) Where? Where is it?

LUKA

Well, it's . . . it's in a certain town
what d'yer call it! It's just a name like!
Now you just do this be gettin' ready
Control yourself! Take yerself in hand, and
—wait And then—get cured . . and
begin life all over again . . sounds good,
brother, all over again? Make your mind up,
and it's done

THE ACTOR

(*Smiling*) Over again from the begin-
ning that's fine m-yes
All over again? (*Laughs*) Um Yes!
Can't? I really can, eh?

LUKA

Can yer? Anything a man can do if 'e
makes up his mind to do it .

THE ACTOR

(Suddenly, as if awakened) You're a crank
By-bye for the present ! *(Whistles)* Old boy
—goodbye to yer.

(Goes out)

ANNA

Gran'pa, darling !

LUKA

What, dearie?

ANNA

Talk to me

LUKA.

(Close to her) Come now, let's talk

*(KLESSHTSH looks round, silently comes
towards his wife, looks at her, makes
some movements with his hands, as
though wishing to speak)*

What's up, comrade?

KLESSHTSH

(In a low voice) Nothing

*(Goes slowly to passage door, stands in it
for a few seconds—and goes out)*

LUKA

(Following him with his eyes) Takes it to
heart, does your old man

ANNA

He's nothing now to me.

LUKA

Did 'e beat yer?

ANNA

Worse than that I'm dyin' through
'im

BOOBNOFF

My wife she 'ad a lover—played draughts
finely—a thorough scoundrel

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Um-m

ANNA

Dear gran'pa! Talk to me, dearie I
can't breathe

LUKA

That's nothing! Comes before death, lovie
Just hope You're goin' to die, and
then you'll be at peace, there'll be nothing more
that yer need fear—nothing! Calm, peace
Don't move! Death—it settles all It's very
tender with us You die, you rest, that's to
say that's what it is, pet! Because—for
can a man find rest here?

(PEPEL comes in He is slightly drunk,
dishevelled, sullen Sits on planks
by door, silent without moving)

ANNA.

If there too—there's suffering?

LUKA.

There won't be anything ! Nothing ! Trust me ! Rest—and nothing more ! They'll lead you up to God, and they'll say, " Lord, look here, behold, here is Thy servant, Anna " .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Severely*) How do you know what they say up there ? I like that

(*At the sound of MYEDVYEDYEFF'S voice, PEPEL lifts up his head and listens*)

LUKA

It's just like this, that I *do* know, Mr Sergeant .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Conciliatory*) M—yes ! I don't see myself though I'm not yet exactly a sergeant

BOOBNOFF.

I take two

MYEDVYEDYEFF

O Lord do go ahead

LUKA.

And the Lord, 'E'll look at you mildly and fondly, and He'll say, " I know that same Anna "
 a

Then He'll say, " Take her, that Anna, into Paradise Let 'er be at peace . . . for I know—'er life it was very hard . . . she's very weary. . . . Give rest unto 'Anna "

ANNA

(*Breathing hard*) Uncle you are such a dear ! If it is so if there's just rest . and to feel nothing more. .

LUKA

There won't be ! There won't be anything ! Trust me ! Die joyfully, and no worry . . . I tell you, Death it's to us like a mother with her little children

ANNA

Yet I may I may get well ?

LUKA

What for ? For fresh suffering ?

ANNA

But to live a little just a wee bit more If there's no suffering I could endure a little longer I could

LUKA

There'll be nothing more It's simple .

PEPEL

(*Rising*) May be and may not be.

ANNA.

(*Frightened.*) Oh, Lord ! . . .

LUKA.

Ah, dearie . . .

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Who's that bellowing?

PEPEL.

Me ! What of it ?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

You shouldn't bellow, that's what Folk should
bear themselves quietly

PEPEL

Ah yer block ! You're a fine uncle
ho—ho !

LUKA .

(*To PEPEL in a low tone*) Please now don't
shout ! A woman's dying here don't dis-
turb 'er !

PEPEL.

I respect you, gran'pa ! You're a brick, you
are ! You're a good liar you put things
nicely ! Lying's no harm there's so little
that's cheering in the world !

BOOBNOFF.

What ! Is the woman really dyin' ?

LUKA.

Ay, there's no joke about it . . .

BOOBNOFF.

Shan't have no more coughing then Most
disturbin' 'er cough was I take two . . .

MYEDVYEDVEFF

Ah, I'm done for—I'm done for !

PEPEL

Abraham !

MYEDVYEDVEFF

Don't call me Abraham

PEPEL

Abramka ! Is Natasha ill ?

MYEDVYEDVEFF

What's that to you ?

PEPEL

I want to know Was it a bad beating Vassilisa
gave her ?

MYEDVYEDVEFF

And that's none of your business ! It's a family
matter. Who do yer think yer are ?

PEPEL

Don't matter who I am but if I choose,
you'll never see Natasha again !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Leaving the game*) What d'yer say? Who are yer talkin' of? D'yer think my niece? Ah, yer robber!

PEPEL

A robber you never could catch

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Wait! I'll catch yer you see

PEPEL.

Catch me—and I'd flog the whole nest of yer D'yer think I'd keep quiet before the beak? Expect a wolf to howl! They say, "Who taught yer to rob, and showed yer the cribs?" Mikhail Kostoloff and his wife! "Who was yer fence?" Mikhail Kostoloff and his wife!

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Lies! They won't believe yer!

PEPEL.

Yes, they will, for it's truth! And I'll give you a twist ha! I'll sink the whole lot of yer, yer devils—you see!

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Shaking*) Lies! And lies! And what 'arm 'ave I done to you? Yer scabby cur!

PEPEL

And what good 'ave yer done to me?

LUKA.

Right there !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*To* LUKA) What er you . . . croaking for?
'Is this any of your business? This is a family
matter !

BOOBNOFF

(*To* LUKA) Let be ! Not ours to meddle in

LUKA

(*Peaceably*) I said nothing ! I only say that
if one man 'asn't done good to another, 'e 'asn't
done well

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Not understanding*) 'Ere we are and
we all know one another But who are you,
pray ?

(*Makes an angry grimace and goes out*)

LUKA

The gentleman's angry Oh-ho, brothers,
things here I see things here in a tangle !

PEPEL

'E's gone to whine to Vassilisa

BOOBNOFF

You're foolish, Vassili Much good yer bold-
ness has done yer . Boldness is all right in
its place but 'ere it cuts no figure. . .
They'll slice yer 'ead off alive

PEPEL.

N-no, they won't ! Us Yaroslaff boys—you don't catch us napping . if it's war we shall fight. . . .

LUKA.

But I tell you truly, lad, you get out of this house . get clear of it

PEPEL

Where to ? You tell me that

LUKA

Go to Siberia

PEPEL

Ho-ho When I go to Siberia, I mean to go at the charge of the Crown

LUKA.

Now listen to me—you go there ! There you can make your own way you're just the kind for there !

PEPEL

The way is marked out for me My father passed his whole life in prison, and 'e told me to Why, when I was a little boy they called me thief—and thief's son

LUKA.

But it's a grand country—Siberia ! A golden country. 'Oo 'as the might 'as the right.

PEPEL.

Old boy, why are you always lying?

LUKA.

What's that?

PEPEL.

Deaf? Why do yer lie, I ask?

LUKA

In what do yer mean I lie?

PEPEL

In all you say it's good there, good here
you're plainly lying! What's it for?

LUKA

You take my word and go there, and see fer
yerself You'll say thanks What's the
good of loafing here? And why are yer so
mad after the truth? Think a bit! The
same truth might cut like a razor

PEPEL

I don't care! If it's a razor, it's a razor .

LUKA

Oh, you're crazy! Why go and destroy
yerself?

BOOBNOFF

What is it that you two are jawing about?
I don't know! What sort of a truth, Vaska,

'd'yer want? And why? Yer know the truth about yerself . . . ay, and every one knows it . . .

PEPEL.

Hold on, stop yer croaking! I want 'im to tell me listen, old man is there a God?

(LUKA gives a silent smile)

Say now, is there?

BOOBNOFF

People just live like shavings on a stream a house is built . and the shavings . off they floats !

LUKA.

(*In a low voice*) If you believe it— there is , if you don't believe it, there's not . that which yer believe in, that is

(PEPEL looks at the old man fixedly and in surprise)

BOOBNOFF.

Shall we go and have some tea come on to the trakteer? Eh?

LUKA.

(*To PEPEL*) What are you looking at?

PEPEL.

Just so. . Now wait Then that means . . .

BOOBNOFF

Then I'll go alone

(Goes to door, encounters VASSILISA)

PEPEL

Therefore you

VASSILISA.

(To BOOBNOFF) Nastya at home?

BOOBNOFF

No

(Goes out)

PEPEL

Ah you're there

VASSILISA

(Over to ANNA) Still alive?

LUKA.

Don't disturb 'er

VASSILISA

What er yer hanging about here for?

LUKA

I'll go if yer want me to

VASSILISA

(Towards the door of PEPEL'S room) Vassili !
I've somethin' to say ter you

*(LUKA goes to the passage door, opens it,
and shuts it loudly Then he clambers
on to the planks, and from there on to
the stove)*

VASSILISA.

(*From PEPEL'S room*) Vaska . come here !

PEPEL

I'm not coming I don't mean to .

VASSILISA

Ah what's wrong? What's annoyin' yer?

PEPEL

I'm bored sick of the whole rigmarole

VASSILISA

And of me?

PEPEL

And of you

(*VASSILISA draws her handkerchief tight over her chest, pressing against it her hands Goes towards ANNA, looks carefully behind the curtains, and returns to PEPEL*)

Well out with it

VASSILISA

Out with what? Can't force people to be kind
and it ain't in me to beg for kindness
. Thank you for the truth

PEPEL

What truth?

VASSILISA.

That I'm a bore to you . . . or isn't it the truth?

(PEPEL looks at her in silence. She turns to him)

What er yer staring at? Don't yer know me?

PEPEL

(*With a sigh*) You're beautiful, Vassilisa (*she puts her hand on his shoulder, but he shakes it off*)—but my 'eart it was never yours . . . And I lived with you, and the rest of it . . . and I've never really liked yer

VASSILISA

So-o . . . well?

PEPEL

Well, we've nothing to talk about ! Nothing at all ! Get away from me !

VASSILISA

You fancy some one else?

PEPEL

Not your business . . . If it was so it's not you I'd consult

VASSILISA

That's a pity . . . P'raps I might arrange things.

PEPEL

(*Suspiciously*) What- d'yer say?

VASSILISA.

You know how to conceal things
Vassili I'm a straight chap (*Lower*)
I'll hide nothing you've dealt with me
shabby for no reason you've laid it on with
a whip said yer loved me, and all of a
sudden . .

PEPEL

'Twasn't sudden for a long time
there's no soul in you, woman we are
beasts We must be we must be
trained and what 'ave you trained me to?

VASSILISA

What was it over? I know a man can't
help 'is own will yer love me no more
all right

PEPEL

That's it, it's at an end We part peaceably,
without no 'rows the proper way!

VASSILISA

No, wait now! It's this When we came
together I banked on you to drag me out of all
this nastiness—to free me from my 'usband, my
uncle from all this life and p'raps it
wasn't you, Vaska, that I loved but my hope

. . . it was that thought of you I loved. . . .
D'you follow? I expected you to pull me
out. .

PEPEL

You aren't a nail, I—ain't a pincers . . .
you've wits enough and you're—wily !

VASSILISA

(*Coming close to him*) Vaska ! Come, now
let's 'elp one another

PEPEL

'Ow?

VASSILISA

(*Low and forcible*) My sister she's
taken yer fancy, I know

PEPEL

And that's why you beat her, you savage !
Vassilisa, look 'ere ! Don't dare to lay a finger
on 'er

VASSILISA

Stop now ! Don't get hot ! It can all be done
quietly and well D'yer wish—to marry 'er ? I'll
give yer money with 'er three hundred solid
roubles ! If I can afford it, more

PEPEL

(*Coming up to her*) Stop why is it ?
What's it for ?

VASSILISA.

Rid me . . from my 'usband Relieve me
of that millstone .

PEPEL

(*Whistling softly*) So now we've got to it
Oh ho-ho ! A very crafty notion . . get your
'usband in his grave, your lover doin' time, whilst
you . .

VASSILISA

Vaska ! Why doin' time ? You won't yerself
get some of yer pals ! Suppose it was
yerself, who's to know ? Natasha think
now ! You'll 'ave money you can go any-
where set me free for ever, then, too, the
sister, she won't be round me, that's good fer
'er. The sight of 'er's bad for me on ac-
count of you I get spiteful and I can't hold
it in I torment the girl, beat her
beat her so that myself I can cry with pity
for her yet I beat her And—I will beat
her !

PEPEL

You savage ! Do yer brag of yer savageness ?

VASSILISA

I don't brag—I speak truth Think now, Vaska
Twice through my 'usband 'ave you gone to jail
 . through 'is avarice 'E's glued to me
like a limpet four whole years ! And what
sort of a 'usband d'yer call 'im ? 'E scolds

Natasha, torments her, calls 'er a beggar ! To every one 'e's just—poison . . .

PEPEL

You do yarn cleverly

VASSILISA

All I say's above board It's only a fool
that won't see what I want

(KOSTOLOFF *enters cautiously and steals forward*)

PEPEL

(*To VASSILISA*) Oh—get away !

VASSILISA

Think it over ! (*Sees husband*) What, you ?
Er yer followin' me ?

(PEPEL *leaps up and eyes KOSTOLOFF savagely*)

KOSTOLOFF

It's me me ! You're here—by your-
selves ! Ah—ah You're having a talk
(*Suddenly stamping with his feet and shouting out*) Vaska . you devil ! Beggar ! Hag !
(*Startled at his own cries, met by silence and immobility*) I ask pardon . Here again,
Vassilisa, you lead me into sin . Been every-
where hunting fer yer (*In a scream*) It's
bedtime ! You've forgotten to fill the lamps . . .

you, you . . . beggar . . . sow . . . (*Points at her with trembling hands*)

(VASSILISA slowly goes to passage door, looking round at PEPEL)

PEPEL

(*To KOSTOLOFF*) Get out of here clear out . . .

KOSTOLOFF

(*Yells*) I'm the master! Clear out yourself, thief!

PEPEL

(*Sullenly*) Be off, Mikhail!

KOSTOLOFF

You dare to—I'll show you I tell you

(*PEPEL seizes him by the collar and shakes him. A noise is heard from the stove and a loud yawning. PEPEL releases KOSTOLOFF, who runs into the passage.*)

PEPEL

(*Springing on to the planks*) Who's there on that stove?

LUKA

(*Raising his head*) Eh?

PEPEL.

You?

LUKA.

Me . . . me myself. . . . Of Lord Jesus Christ.

PEPEL

(Closes the passage door, feels for the bolt and can't find it) The devils! Old man, get down!

LUKA

All ri-ight . getting down

PEPEL

(Menacingly) Why did yer get on that stove?

LUKA

Where 'ud yer 'ave me get?

PEPEL

Yer made as you'd gone in the passage.

LUKA

In the passage, comrade, it's cold for an old man

PEPEL

You heard?

LUKA

Ay—heard How not to hear? Ud yer 'ave me deaf? Ah, my lad, your happiness is coming to yer it's happiness that's coming to yer.

PEPEL.

(*Suspiciously*) What 'appiness? In what way?

LUKA

Why, in the way that took me on to the stove

PEPEL

Ah. why did you make that noise?

LUKA

Why, because I was getting aglow for the orphan laddie's welfare yet I knew well that the laddie might take it all wrong, that he might be for throttling the old man

PEPEL

Ye-es it was a near thing .

LUKA

Ay them mistakes often get made

PEPEL

What are you?

LUKA

My lad! Now listen to me, what I say that woman—cut it! Nothing to do with 'er!—keep out of 'er way? She'll put 'er 'usband out of the way better ner you could, yes! Don't you listen to her, the devil Look at me—ah? Bald . and why? Out of all these same different sorts of women I should say I've known,

maybe, more women than ever there grew hairs
upon my head And that Vassilisa—she
. . . she's worse than a pagan Finn !

PEPEL. .

I don't know if I ought to thank yer, or
whether you as well

LUKA

Don't you say nothin' ! You'll say nothing
better than what I've said ! Listen the one
you fancy, put 'er arm in yours, and out of here
in double-quick time Get out of here, clean
away

PEPEL

No makin' people out ! Who's good, 'oo's bad
can't understand a thing

LUKA

What's there to understand ? There's all sorts
of men As their hearts tells 'em, so they
live good to-day, bad to-morrow But if
that girl's really got hold of yer heart take
'er clear off, and 'ave done with it Or else
go alone you're young, you've time to look
out for a wife

PEPEL

(*Takes him by the shoulder*) No, you tell
me, why are you on to this ?

LUKA.

Now come, let me go . Must see to Anna

. . . she was rattling so bad . . . (*Goes to Anna's bed, opens curtains, looks, feels with his hand*)

(*PEPEL comes after him, thoughtful and distraught*)

Jesus Christ, most merciful Lord, the spirit of Thy newly departed servant Anna receive into Thy peace

PEPEL

(*Softly*) Dead ? (*Without approaching, leans forward so as to obtain a sight of the bed*)

LUKA

(*Softly*) She is gone ! Where will 'er 'usband be ?

PEPEL

In the trakteer, most likely

LUKA

Well, 'e must know

PEPEL

(*Shuddering*) I don't care for dead people.

LUKA.

(*Going to the door*) What's there to care for ? Care for the living the living

PEPEL

I'll come with yer

LUKA

What, afraid?

PEPEL.

Don't like it

*(They go out quickly)**(Emptiness and silence At the passage
door a dull, incomprehensible, uneven
sound is heard Then enter the
ACTOR)*

THE ACTOR

*(Standing in the open door, supporting himself
against the door-posts, shouts out)* Old man,
hi! Where are yer? I've remembered
listen!*(He staggers two steps forward, strikes an
attitude, and begins.)**Then, gentlemen, for all our pain
If truth still flee our straining eyes,
Shall we not hail the madman's brain
The brain that spins us golden lies?**(NATASHA appears in the door behind the
ACTOR)*

Old man!

*And tho' the earth to atoms fly,
And tho' the sun be quenched and dead,
They shall be re-created by
The thought within a madman's head*

NATASHA

(*Laughs.*) You gaby! You're full. . .

THE ACTOR

(*Turns to her*) Ah, it's you! Where's the little old boy . . . the darling little old man? Nowhere 'ere, that's clear . . . Natasha, farewell . . . Farewell . . . yes

NATASHA

Never said good-day, now says goodbye

THE ACTOR

(*Barring the way to her*) I—am going away
The spring'll come, and you won't see me
no more.

NATASHA

Rubbish . . . where er yer goin'?

THE ACTOR

To find a town . . . to get cured . . . you
clear out, too . . . Ophelia . . . into a monastery
yer see, there's a hospital for organisms
for drunkards . . . a splendid hospital
Marble . . . marble floor! Light, clean food—
all for nothing! And a marble floor . . . yes!
I'll find it, get cured, and . . . I shall be all
over again . . . I'm on the way to regeneration
. . . as said . . . King Lear . . . Natasha, on the
stage . . . my name was Svertchkoff—Yavolski
. . . No one knows that—no one! I've no name

here. . . Can't you understand how that's gall-
ing—to lose yer name? Dogs even have their
names.

(NATASHA manages to get round the ACTOR,
goes over to ANNA'S bed and looks)

No name, and you're no man.

NATASHA

Look the poor soul look ! She's
dead !

THE ACTOR

(Shaking his head) It can't be

NATASHA

(Moving away) God ! yes look

BOOBNOFF

(In the door) Look at what ?

NATASHA

Anna she's dead

BOOBNOFF

Won't cough no more, that means (Goes
to ANNA'S bed, looks, goes to his place) You
must tell Klesshtsh it's 'is business .

THE ACTOR

I'll go and tell him . she has lost her
name.

(Goes out.)

NATASHA.

And then . . . one I too . same
for all . . struck down

BOOBNOFF.

(Stretching a rag of some kind over his planks) What—what er yer mumbling?

NATASHA

So . to myself

BOOBNOFF

Waiting for Vaska? You see, Vaska'll break yer head for yer .

NATASHA

Does it much matter—'oo breaks it? I'd sooner that he did

BOOBNOFF

(Lying down) That's your affair .

NATASHA

For surely it's well she's dead it's
sad, too Lord! Why do people live?

BOOBNOFF

So with all born, live, die And I shall
die and you too where's the sad-
ness?

(Enter LUKA, the TARTAR, WHEN, and KLESSHTSH KLESSHTSH comes behind the others, slowly, shrunk up)

NATASHA

Sh ! Anna.

WHEN

We've heard in 'eaven, if she's
dead

THE TARTAR

(*To KLESSHTSH*) You must have her out !
Out into the passage ! Can't keep dead bodies in
here , here the living have to sleep

KLESSHTSH

(*Low*) Well, take 'er out

(*All go over to the bed, KLESSHTSH looks
at his wife over the others' shoulders*)

WHEN.

(*To the TARTAR*) You think she'll smell?
There'll be no smell from her she 'ad
wasted alive .

NATASHA

Good Lord ! won't yer pity 'er? if some-
one 'ud speak a kind word ! Oh, you

LUKA

Girle, dor't take on it's all right ! For
what and how shall we pity the dead? Eh,
darling ! The living we don't pity . and
ourselves we don't pity why her?

BOOBNOFF.

(*Yawning*) And besides, death don't wince from a word illness may wince from a word, but death no !

THE TARTAR

(*Going out.*) Must fetch the police

WHEN

Police—that must be done ! Klesshtsh ! 'ave yer informed the police?

KLESSHTSH

No she's got to be buried and all I've got's forty kopyeks

WHEN

Well, in that case yer must borrow and we'll club together one gives five, another—what 'e can But get the police—and quick ! Else they'll be fancying it was yer doin', or what not (*Goes to the planks and makes ready to lie down beside the TARTAR*)

NATASHA

(*Moving away from BOOBNOFF'S planks*) Now you see I shall dream of 'er the dead always appear in my dreams I'm afraid to go alone it's dark on the passage

LUKA

(*Following her*) You be afraid of the living . that's what I say

NATASHA

Come with me, daddy.

LUKA

Come come, I'll see yer safe !

(They go out A pause)

WHEN

Oh—ho-o ! Hassan, spring soon, mate
we shall feel warmer then Now in the country
already peasant's looking to 'is plough and 'is
'arrows, gettin' ready to till all ready for
tilling m-yes ! And we Hassan?
Snoring already ! Accursed Mahometan !

BOOBNOFF

Tartars love to sleep

KLESSHTSH

*(Standing in the middle of the shelter and
gazing vacantly in front of him)* What am I
goin' to do now?

WHEN

Lie down, and sleep that's all there is
to it

KLESSHTSH

(Low) But she how?

(No one answers)

(SATINE and the ACTOR come in.)

THE ACTOR.

(*Shouts out*) Old 'un ! Hither to me, my true
Kent

SATINE.

Way for Miklooka—Maklai Ho-ho !

THE ACTOR

It's fixed and decided ! Old 'un, where's the
town where are yer ?

SATINE

Fata Morgana, the old man diddled yer !
There's nothing No towns, no people—
nothing at all !

THE ACTOR

You lie !

THE TARTAR

(*Leaping up*) Where's the master ? I'll fetch
the master If I can't sleep 'e shan't take my
money Corpses drunkards

(*Goes out quickly*)

(SATINE *whistles after him*)

BOOBNOFF

(*In a sleepy voice*) Lie down, boys, keep
quiet in the night yer must sleep.

THE ACTOR

Yes . . . here—aha ! A corpse. . . . " We
took a corpse up in our nets " . . . poetry . . .
Béranger !

SATINE.

(*Calls out*) Corpses can't hear ! corpses
can't feel. Bellow yell . corpses
can't hear .

(LUKA *appears in the doorway*)

END OF THE SECOND ACT

THE THIRD ACT

THE THIRD ACT

SCENE — "*The Waste*," strewn with all sorts of rubbish and overgrown with long grass At the back, a high brick party wall It shuts out the sky Around it are elder bushes At right a dark timber wall belonging to some sort of an outhouse, a barn or a stable At left the grey, crumbling plaster wall of the house in which KOSTOLOFF'S night-shelter is It stands on a slant, so that the further corner reaches almost to the middle of the "Waste" Between it and the party wall a narrow passage In the grey wall are two windows one on a level with the ground, the other about six feet higher up and closer to the party wall By that wall is a big sledge turned upside down and a beam about twelve feet long At right, by wall, a heap of old planks Evening The sun is setting, throwing a red light on the party wall Early spring, the snow being lately melted No buds as yet on the black elder branches

(NATASHA and NASTYA are seated on the beam, side by side LUKA and the BARON on the sledge KLESSHTSH is lying on the pile of timber, right In the ground-floor window BOOBNOFF'S mug)

NASTYA.

(With eyes closed, and nodding her head in tune to the words, relates in a sing-song way)
Then at night would he come into the garden and talk with me, as we 'ad agreed . and I had been waiting for him a long while, and I shook with dread and anguish And he shook, too, and—pale as honey, and 'e 'eld in 'is 'and a pistol . . .

NATASHA.

(Chewing reeds) Oo ! Then it's true that these students—they're such desperate fellows .

NASTYA

And he says to me in a terrible voice, " My own precious love "

BOOBNOFF

Ho-oh ! Precious ?

THE BARON

Here ! If you don't like it, don't listen, let her lie When, then ?

NASTYA

" My imperishable love," 'e says, " my parents," 'e says, " will not consent for me to marry yer and threaten to curse me for ever because of my love for you Therefore, I must," 'e says, " for that reason take my own life." And his pistol was huge, loaded with

ten bullets . . . "Farewell," 'e says, "my 'eart's beloved comrade ! I 'ave decided past recall . . . to live without you—that I cannot " And I replied, " Oh, never can I forget you, my Raoul ! "

BOOBNOFF

(*In astonishment*) What—what's that ?—
Kravol ?

THE BARON

(*Laughs*) Come, Nastya, steady on ! Why, last time it was Gaston !

NASTYA

(*Leaping on*) Silence, you wretches ! mongrels ! D'yer think you d'yer think you can understand love ? Real love ? For mine—it was real ! (*To BARON*) You ! Dirt ! an educated man, you lay and drank coffee, did yer ?

LUKA

Come now, come wait a bit ! And don't vou interfere ! Show respect to folk not in word—but in deed It's the reason for a word that matters That's where the matter lies ! Tell along, dearie girl, it's all right !

BOOBNOFF

" For all the crow may dye its wings " .
Dash along !

THE BARON.

Well, what then?

NATASHA

Don't mind them . . . what are they?
They're only jealous . . . 'cause there's nothing
to tell about themselves

NASTYA

(*Re-seats herself*) No, I won't any more ! I
won't go on . . . If they won't believe
if they're going to laugh (*Breaks off suddenly,
is silent for a few minutes, then, with closed
eyes, and keeping time with her hands, as though
beating to some far-off music, she goes on again
loudly and heatedly*) And then I answer to 'im,
"Joy of my life ! thou, my limpid moon ! And
I, too—it is not possible for me to live without
yer . . . because I love you so wildly, as I shall
love you as long as a heart beats in this bosom !
But—I say—take not away your young life . . . It
is so necessary to your dear parents, for you
are all their joy . . . give me up ! let me cast
away my life . . . out of my love for thee . . .
I am—alone . . . I am—what I am ! I am fit
for nothing . . . and I 'ave nothing . . .
nothing—nothing at all " . . . (*Hides her face
in her hands, and weeps noiselessly*)

NATASHA

(*Turning to one side, in a low tone*) Don't
cry . . . yer mustn't cry !

(LUKA, with a smile, strokes NATASHA'S
head)

BOOBNOFF.

(*Laughs*) Ah! . . . what damned foolery!

THE BARON.

(*Also laughing*) Old 'un! D'yer think all that's true? All out of a book—"The Fatal Love"
. . . It's all a lot of trash! Let 'er alone!

NATASHA

Leave off! Just shut yer mouth! God'll punish yer yet

NASTYA

(*Bitterly*) Degraded creature! Empty fellow! How could you have—a soul?

LUKA

(*Taking NASTYA'S hand*) Come away, dearie! It's nothing don't get angry! I—know I—believe! It's you that's right, not them If you believe you had a real love why, then, you had one—'ad one! But don't get angry with 'im, with yer room-mate maybe he's envious, and that's what he's laughing for maybe 'e never 'ad one of that real sort 'ad nothing! Come along, then!

NASTYA

(*Pressing her hands fast against her bosom*) Gran'pa! God's truth . . . that's 'ow it was . . . it was, indeed it was! 'E was a student a Frenchman—we called 'im Gastosha . . .

or little black beard . . . and wore patent boots
. . . strike me dead if I'm lying ! And 'e loved
me so . . . 'e loved me so !

LUKA.

I—know ! It's all right ! I believe ! Did 'e
wear patent boots ? Ai—ai—ai—and *you* loved
'*im* too, didn't yer ?

(Disappears round the corner)

THE BARON

There's a fool of a girl for yer ! Good !
but such a fool—it's incredible !

BOOBNOFF

Why is it ? people's so fond of lying—
just as if they was up before the beak it's
so !

NATASHA

Can't yer see that lies is jollier
than the truth I too—

THE BARON

You too ? Come, let's have it !

NATASHA

I think, and think and I think and
—expect

THE BARON

What ?

NATASHA.

(*Smiling in a perturbed way*) Just . .
Now, I think, to-morrow . . there'll come
somebody . . . something extraordinary
. . or something will 'appen something
unusual . . I've been expectin' long . . I'm
always expectin' But really . . as a
matter of fact—what is there to expect?

(*Pause*)

THE BARON

(*With a faint smile*) Nothing to expect
I—expect nothing! All that was has been!
Passed, ended! What then?

NATASHA

And then I get a fancy that to-morrow
suddenly I shall die and that
gets me scared In the summer it makes
one imagine about death in summer the
storms are about you may be struck by
lightning

THE BARON

Your life, it's a hard one that sister of
yours has a fiend's temper

NATASHA

Tell me—'oo does live 'apply? It's 'ard for
all that I see

KLESSHTSH

(*Till then motionless and indifferent, suddenly*

jumping up.) For all? That's a lie! Not for all! If for all . then all right! Then—there's no 'arm . yes!

BOOBNOFF

What's up—is the devil biting yer? You, indeed, howlin' that way!

(KLESSHTSH *lies down again in his place, muttering*)

THE BARON

Um! I must go and make it up with Natasha if I don't I'll not have the money for a drink

BOOBNOFF

Um! People's fond of lying With Nastya it's clear enough! She's used to colourin' 'er mug and 'ere she is now wantin' to colour her soul to put rooge on her soul But the others why do they? Now, for instance, there's Luka . 'e lies rarely 'e gets nothin' from it And an old man, too—why is it all?

THE BARON

(*Smiling and going off*) All men they have all grey souls and they all want to rouge 'em up. . .

(LUKA *appears from round the corner*)

LUKA.

Now, dear sir, why do you tease the girl? Don't interfere with 'er . . . let 'er cry—it gives her pleasure. . . . It's for 'er own pleasure, yer see, that she 'as 'er weeps . . . where is the 'arm to you?

THE BARON

It's rubbish, old man! She's a nuisance To-day Raoul, to-morrow—Gaston still the same old tale! Still—I shall go and make it up with 'er

(*Goes out*)

LUKA

Go along, that's it go and fondle 'er! Fondle people never does no 'arm

NATASHA

Daddy, 'ow good yer are! Why are yer so good?

LUKA

Good, der yer say? Um that's right, if so be yes! (*Behind the party wall the sound of low singing to a concertina is heard*) One must, dearie, be good to some one and we must pity people! Christ—He pitied all, and so He ordered us I say this—if you pity a man then good comes of it! Here, now, I was once a caretaker in a villa . . . an engineer's it was, near the town of Tomsk Ay, it was! The villa stood in a forest, in the 'eart of it and it was winter and—there I

was in the 'ouse all alone . . . Well and good !
One day—a sound—people rustling !

NATASHA

Thieves ?

LUKA.

Yes That's what's rustlin', ay ! Pick up
my little gun, and out I went See 'em—two
openin' the window—so busy about it that
—they don't see me I shouts out, " You rascals
be off ! " And then, yer see, they're at me
with an 'atchet I tell 'em to stand off !
Or else—I fire ! And my gun I keeps
pointin' it at one and then the other Down they
goes on their knees, as to say, " Have mercy ! "
For I tell you I was riled 'cause of the 'atchet,
you see ! I says " Now, you woodmen, I've
ordered yer off oncc, and you're not gone Now
just you break me off a birch " They broke it off
Now, I says " Lie down " to the one, and to the
other, " Flog 'im " So they flogged one another
And then they began to beseech me " Dearie
man," they says, " for Christ's sake give us some
bread ! We'll go away , we meant no 'arm " Them
was my robbers, lovie (*Laughs*) Them was
their 'atchet, too ! Yes good peasants both
of 'em I says to them " Why, my wood-
men, you should 'ave asked right out for bread "
And they say " We're tired of asking," they say
—" ask and ask and no one gives it's
cruel ! " So all that winter they lived with me
The one that was called Stepan—he'd take my gun

and go shootin' in the forest . But the other man, Jacob—'e was ill, coughing always . . And there the three of us together—we took care of the villa. When the spring came—"Goodbye," they say, "gran'pa !" And off they went they were going to Russia

NATASHA

Were they runaways?—convicts?

LUKA.

That's just what they were—runaways broken out of prison Proper moujiks ! If I'd not pitied them—maybe that they'd 'ave killed me or what not Besides—courts, and prison and Siberia where's the sense? Prison don't teach nothin' good, and Siberia don't but it's the man—'e teaches yes ! A man, 'e can teach for good very simply !

(Pause)

BOOBNOFF

M-m-yes ! But here am I I can't lie ! Why ? To my lights—give us just all the truth, as it is ! Why 'ide anythin' ?

KLESSHTSH

(Suddenly leaping up again and shouting out in an ecstatic way) What's truth ? Where is the truth ? (Tearing at his rags) Here's—truth ! No work no strength ! Here's truth ! No shelter no shelter ! We must pant and die that is the truth ! The devil !

What—what do I want with the truth? Give me room to breathe . . . room to breathe! Why am I guilty? What's to me . . . the truth? Can't live—blast it!—I can't live! Live—hell!—let us live . . . and there is the truth! . . .

BOOBNOFF

Touched 'im up a bit! .

LUKA

Lord Jesus now listen, love! You . .

KLESSHTSH

(Quivering with excitement) You talk about—truth You, old man, you go about and you soothe every one I tell yer I loathe every one! And that's a truth . blast the truth! Now do you hear? Now do you know? I say to you—blast it!

(Rushes off round the corner, turning as he goes)

LUKA

A1—A1—A1! It's a real shock 'e's 'ad . . Where's 'e run off to?

NATASHA

'Is raving don't matter

BOOBNOFF

'E let it go fine! The way they do in the theatres. . . Often 'appens that way . not got used to the life

(PEPEL comes slowly round the corner.)

PEPEL.

Peace be to this honest assemblage ! Well,
Luka, my wily old boy, been givin' them the
story of yer life ?

LUKA

You ought to 'ave 'eard just now 'ow one fell
a-shouting !

PEPEL

What, Klesshtsh, was it ? What's up with 'im ?
'E's runnin' as if he was scalded

LUKA

When yer run like that, it means it's
gone right to yer 'eart

PEPEL

(*Sitting down*) Don't like 'im 'e's beastly
spiteful and 'aughty (*Imitates KLESSHTSH*)
I am a working man Every one's beneath 'im
Work, if yer want to nothin' to be
cocky about ? If yer value people by their work
a 'orse can give any man points 'e
pulls and—says nothin' ! Natasha ! Your people
—in ?

NATASHA

They're gone in the Sqtare—then to evenin'
service .

PEPEL.

So, yes, I see that you're free for once . . . a novelty !

LUKA

(*Reflectively to BOOBNOFF*) Now see . . .
 you say—truth it's not always a good treat-
 ment for man can't always heal the soul
 with the truth For instance, now 'ere's a
 case I knew a man 'oo believed in a land of
 righteousness

BOOBNOFF

In wha-at?

LUKA

In a land of righteousness "There must," 'e said, "on the earth be a land of righteousness and there must be dwelling in that land—an exceptional kind of people good people ! they respect one another, and it's just natural to them to help one another and all about them is wonderfully good ! " And there was that man 'oo was always wantin' to go and seek the land of righteousness 'E was—poor, lived miserably and when it got so bad with 'im that even lyn' down didn't 'elp 'im—still 'e didn't lose 'eart, he'd only just smile and 'e'd say "Never mind ! I can bear it ! A little more waiting—and I've done with all this life—and I shall go off to the land of righteousness " . . . It was his one delight, was that land . . .

PEPEL.

Well? Did 'e go?

BOOBNOFF

Where? Ho, ho !

LUKA.

And then to this place—all this was in Siberia—there came an exile, 'e was a scholar books and plans 'e 'ad, that scholar 'ad, and every sort of thing Then the man says to the scholar "Show me, if you will be so kind, where does the land of righteousness lie, and which is the way there?" At once the scholar opens 'is books, undoes 'is plans 'e looked—looked—no, there's nowhere no land of righteousness It's quite true, the countries there are all marked, but for a righteousness one—there isn't such !

PEPEL

What? None?

(BOOBNOFF *laughs*)

NATASHA

Stop now Well, uncle?

LUKA

The man won't believe "There must be," 'e says "look well ! If not," 'e says, "yer books and yer plans they're no use if there isn't any land of righteousness " The scholar was offended "My plans," 'e says, "are the very latest, and there isn't nowhere not any land of

righteousness at all." Well, and then the man grew angry "Can't be! I've lived and lived and suffered and suffered and always believed—there is! and your plan says that there's not! Robbery!" Then 'e says to the scholar "Ah, you you scum! You're a swindler, not a scholar" and gives 'im one—whack—on 'is ear! Then another!

(Silence)

And after that 'e went 'ome and 'anged 'imself!

(All are silent, LUKA, with a smile, looks at PEPEL and NATASHA)

PEPEL

(In low tones) Oh, the devil! that's not a cheerful tale

NATASHA

'E couldn't stand the deceit

BOOBNOFF

(Sullen) All of it's made up

PEPEL

M-yes so much for your land of righteousness
it wasn't to be found

NATASHA

I'm sorry for that man

BOOBNOFF

It's all—a story . . . Ho, ho ! the land of
righteousness ! There's a notion ! Ho, ho, ho !

(Disappears from window)

LUKA

(Nodding towards window) 'E laughs ! Eh-
hay-hay ! Well, children live in
God ! I'll soon be leaving you

PEPEL

Where are yer off ?

LUKA.

To little Russia I'm told that they've
found there a new faith 'ave to look into
it yes ! People are always seeking and
wishing—a better way God give 'em
patience !

PEPEL

'Ow d'yer think—will they find it ?

LUKA

If people will ? They'll—find it ! Who wishes
—finds who wishes strongly—finds !

NATASHA

If they'd found anything they'd 'ave
arranged better than

LUKA.

They're arranging ! But they must be 'elped,
little one they must be respected . . .

NATASHA.

'Ow can I 'elp? I'm without 'elp . . . for myself. . . .

PEPEL

(*Decisively*) Once more I'm . . . I'm going again ter talk ter yer . . . Natasha . . . It's—this—'e knows all. Come . . . with me!

NATASHA

Where? To prison?

PEPEL

I told you—I'll chuck thieving! God's truth—I'll chuck it! What I've said—I'll do! I can read and write I'll work . . . Here's 'e been tellin' me to go to Siberia on my own hook . . . let's go together—eh? . . . D'yer think my life, it don't jar me? Ah, Natasha . . . I know I see I consoles myself because I see others steals more than me, and they live in honour though they don't help me! It ain't that! I ain't repentin' . . . I don't believe in conscience . . . But this thing I *do* feel I must live different! Must live better! Must live . . . so as I can be able to respect myself

LUKA

That's true, friend! God grant it . . . Christ 'elp yer! True a man ought to respect 'imself.

PEPEL.

I've been from my cradle a thief . . . all 'ave always said to me : " Vaska's a thief, the son of a thief." Aha ! Eh ? There it is ! Set down—a thief ! . . . Yer see . I might 'ave been a thief from badness—yes . . . but I 'ave been a thief because no one ever called me anythin' else . . . Say now Natasha, well ?

NATASHA.

(*Sorrowfully*) Some way, I don't believe not in any words . And I feels uneasy to-day . my 'eart's 'eavy . as though I was expectin' somethin' It's a pity, Vassili, you started on this to-day

PEPEL

But when then ? It isn't for the first time.

NATASHA

And where should I go with you ? As to . . . loving you I don't much love you . . . At times—you *do* please me then sometimes I can't bear to see you when it's love . . . one sees nothing bad in one's sweet-heart . . . but I—see

PEPEL.

You'll love me—never fear ! I'll make you care . . . if only you'll say yes ! I've watched yer for over a year I see you're a straight

girl . . . good . . . a man yer can trust . . .
'e loves yer very much. . . .

(VASSILISA, *in her best dress, appears in
the window and listens*)

NATASHA

Well, you love me, but my sister . . .

PEPEL.

(*Agitated*) Well, what of 'er? That sort
they don't count

LUKA

Never mind that, girlie When yer can't get
good bread, yer put up with stale stuff
When there's no clean, good, fresh bread.

PEPEL

(*Gloomily*) Per'aps yer might pity me My
life's not soft a wolf's life—little joy in
it like a man in a swamp and what-
ever I catches at it's all rotten . no
hold nowhere Your sister I thought
different if she weren't so so 'ot after
money—I'd gladly 'ave taken 'er for good
and all! If as she'd be mine altogether
But she wants other things . She
wants money and 'er own way and
'er way is to—to go on the loose She—can't
'elp me . But you're like a young fir-tree,
and—it may rock, yet it 'olds firm .

LUKA.

And I say—you go with him, dearie, you go with 'im ! 'E's the right sort—a good lad ! And you just keep on remindin' 'im 'e's a good lad, so, I mean, as 'e shan't forget it 'E'll believe yer. . . . Only you say to 'im, "Vaska, it's certain that you're a good man . . don't forget it !" And think, too, dearie, where else is there you could go to?—um? Your sister, she's just a fierce beast—and 'er husband—what can one say of 'im? There's no words bad enough for the old man and all of this life 'ere—what can it lead to? But the lad's strong

NATASHA

Nowhere to go	I know	I've
thought of it.	Only it's this	I don't
believe nobody	But I've nowhere to go	
to .		

PEPEL

One way but that way I'll not let yer go . Sooner I'd kill yer

NATASHA

(*Smiling*) There I'm not his wife yet, and already 'e's talkin' of killin'

PEPEL.

(*Putting his arm round her*) Come, Natasha, say yer will !

NATASHA.

(*Pressing herself to him.*) But this one thing I say, Vaska . . . and I speak it before God!—the first time you strike me, or any way insult me, I'll either 'ang myself . . . or . . .

PEPEL.

May my 'and rot off, if I touches yer!

LUKA

It's all right, never doubt it, lovie. You're dearer to 'im than 'e to you .

VASSILISA.

(*Out of the window*) So that's arranged!
A pretty love council!

NATASHA

She's there Oh Lord! She's seen—ah,
Vaska!

PEPEL.

What er yer frightened for? No one dare touch yer now!

VASSILISA

Don't fear, Natasha! He'll not beat yer .
'E can't beat, for 'e can't love . I know!

LUKA.

(*Low.*) Ah, woman . . . poisonous
snake! . . .

VASSILISA.

'E 'its yer with words. . . .

(KOSTOLOFF *enters.*)

KOSTOLOFF.

Natasha ! What er yer after 'ere, sluggard ?
Tittle-tattling ? Grumbling at yer relatives ? And
the samovar not ready ? the table not
touched ?

NATASHA.

(*Going out*) I thought you was goin' to
Church . .

KOSTOLOFF

That's none of your business where we're
goin' ! Keep to your own business and
do as yer ordered !

PEPEL.

Hold you ! She's no longer yer servant !
Natasha, don't go don't do nothing !

NATASHA.

You stop ordering you're beginning a
bit early !

PEPEL.

(*To KOSTOLOFF*) So that's 'ow I get left
. never mind ! Now she is mine !

KOSTOLOFF

Yours ? When did you buy 'er ? Fer 'ow
much ?

(VASSILISA *laughs*)

LUKA.

Vaska !—you—be off . . .

PEPEL.

You're pleased to think it funny ! Maybe
you'll learn that it's a cryn' matter !

VASSILISA

Oh, 'ow terrible ! Oh, ain't I terrified !

LUKA

Vassili—be off ! for see . she's drawing
yer on working yer up—don't yer under-
stand ?

PEPEL.

Yes aha ! She's lying you lie !
You won't have it all your way !

VASSILISA

And it won't be the way that I don't want,
Vaska !

PEPEL

(*Clenching his fist at her*) We'll see !

(*Goes out*)

VASSILISA

(*Disappearing from window*) I'll arrange you
a wedding

KOSTOLOFF.

Well, my old man?

LUKA.

Just so, my old man! . .

KOSTOLOFF.

So . . you're going away, they say?

LUKA

Soon

KOSTOLOFF

Where?

LUKA

Where my eyes draw me

KOSTOLOFF

On the tramp, you mean Ain't to yer
taste, I see, stoppin' in one place?

LUKA

Under a firm stone no water flows, they say

KOSTOLOFF

That's—for a stone But a man ought to live
on one spot Men ought not to live like beetles
 each one popping about just as ever 'e
pleases A man ought to settle 'imself in one
place . . not wander at random over the
earth. .

LUKA.

But supposing that every place is his place?

KOSTOLOFF.

Why, that shows 'e's a tramp . . . a useless man . . . a man, 'e ought to be of use . . . he ought to labour. .

LUKA

Get on !

KOSTOLOFF.

Yes Consider a vagrant . what is he? A man apart a man not like others. . . Suppose 'e—a real pilgrim—knows somethin' that's no good to any one though it be true enough . . but there's not good in every truth . . yes ! Well, let 'im keep it to 'imself and—keep still ! If he's a real pilgrim, 'e—is silent But then 'e—'e don't wish for nothing, don't interfere, don't annoy people without reason 'Ow people live's none of 'is business 'E ought to follow a righteous life to live in the woods . in the fastnesses out of sight ! And interfere with no one, judge no one . but only pray for all for all the sins of the world . for mine for thine . for all It's for that 'e forsakes all earthly cares . . so as to pray And that's the way (Pause) But you . . what sort of a pilgrim are you? You've no passport a good man should 'ave a passport . . all good people 'as passports . . yes !

LUKA.

There are people, and then there are others
that are men . . .

KOSTOLOFF

Won't do for me. Don't give me no riddles.
. . I'm as clever as you . . What stuff—
people and men !

LUKA

Where's the riddle? I say—there is ground
that won't take seed and there's land that's
fertile whatever you put in it—it grows
. . and by that . .

KOSTOLOFF

What er yer gettin' at?

LUKA

Now thus, for example Suppose the
Lord God 'Imself says, "Mikhail, be you a man !"
. It's all settled without no bother
. . . as you are—so you remain

KOSTOLOFF

But . . but—are you aware—my wife 'as an
uncle—a policeman. And if I .

(VASSILISA comes in)

VASSILISA.

Mikhail Ivanitch, go and 'ave yer tea

KOSTOLOFF.

Here's fer yer ! get out of here ! clear out of this place !

VASSILISA

Yes, you get out, old man ! Your tongue's a sight too long yes, and 'oo knows you're not a runaway

KOSTOLOFF

From to-day take yer carcase off ! or else—look out !

LUKA

Call up uncle ! Call uncle . . think if 'e caught a runaway Uncle might get a reward three kopyeks

BOOBNOFF

(*At window*) What's that for sale ? What's that fer three kopyeks ?

LUKA

It's me they're threatening to sell

VASSILISA

(*To husband*) Come on

BOOBNOFF

For three kopyeks ? 'Why, you see, old man, they'd sell you for one

KOSTOLOFF.

You sprang up just like a devil from
under the stove? (*Going with his wife*)

VASSILISA

What 'eaps of shady people in the world
and every kind of swindlers

LUKA

Wish you a good appetite !

VASSILISA

(*Turning round*) Shut your mouth yer
rotten toadstool !

(*Disappears with her husband round the
corner*)

LUKA

This night—I'm off

BOOBNOFF

That's best Never outstay your welcome .

LUKA

You say true.

BOOBNOFF

I—know Maybe I'd be in prison, if I 'adn't
gone off in time

LUKA

Um?

BOOBNOFF.

True. This way : my wife took up with the master. . . . To say truth, the master was all right . . . 'e was a rare 'and at changing dog's coat, re-dyin' it, into racoon . . . cat's too—into kangaroo . . . musk-rat . . . and all sorts. A knock out ! 'So you see—the wife took up with 'im . . . and they were that gone on one another that I feared they might poison me, or get me out of the world some'ow. So I beat the wife . . . and the master—me . . . We 'ad dreadful fights. Once 'e pulled out 'alf my beard and broke my rib. Then I'd get wild too . . . once I cracked my wife over the noddle with an iron yard . . . and altogether we was in the wars. 'Owever, I see—nothin' can come of all this . . . they get the best of it ! And then I thought to myself—I'd kill my wife. . . . thought of it powerful ! But I pulled myself up in time—and cleared off.

LUKA

That was the best ! Leave 'em to go on changin' dogs into racoons !

BOOBNOFF

Only that the shop was in the wife's name . . . and I was left—as you see ! Though, to tell the truth, I'd 'ave drunk away the shop. For, yer see, I 'as those drinking spells. . .

LUKA

Drinkin' spells ? Ah !

BOOBNOFF.

The worst yer can ! Once I begin to put it down—I do in everything, leave nothin' but my skin. . . . What's more—I'm lazy. It's awful 'ow I 'ate work !

(SATINE and ACTOR enter quarrelling.)

SATINE.

Rot ! You won't go anywhere . it's a pack of lies Old man ! why did yer pour all that stuff into 'is ears ?

THE ACTOR

You lie ! Uncle ! tell 'im that 'e lies ! I—am going ! To-day I worked, swept the floor and took no vodka How's that ? Here they are—two five kopyeks, and I'm—sober !

SATINE.

You pack of fools ! Give it here, I'll drink it !

THE ACTOR

Get out ! That's all towards it

LUKA.

(To SATINE) And you—why do you lead 'im away ?

SATINE.

Tell me, you magician, beloved of the gods—what's my life going to be ? Blown myself, I have, into smithereens ! *But it's all gone yet, uncle—there are sharpeners in the world cleverer than me !

LUKA.

You're merry, Konstantine . . . agreeable !

BOOBNOFF

Actor ! Come along 'ere !

*(The ACTOR comes to the window, and sits
in front of BOOBNOFF on the sill)*

SATINE

In early days, brother, I was a great wag It's
good to remember ! One of the boys in my
time danced splendidly—played on the
stage—liked to amuse people fine

LUKA

'Ow did yer get out of yer bearings, eh ?

SATINE

Aren't you just curious, little old chappie ! You
have to know all but—why ?

LUKA

I want to understand the ways of men
and I look at you—I don't understand ! You're a
bold fellow, Konstantine no fool . . . yet
all at once

SATINE

Prison, daddy ! Four years and seven months
did I sit in prison after the prison
nowhere to go !

LUKA.

Oh-ho, ho ! What were you in for?

SATINE.

For a rascal I killed the rascal in a
rage . and in the prison I learned to play
cards . . .

LUKA

Was the killing—for a woman?

SATINE.

For my own sister Anyhow—you come
off it. I don't care for being questioned
and all that happened long ago My
sister—died nine years have passed since
then Ah, brother, she was a real brick
of a girl, my sister was

LUKA.

You take life easily ! Yet 'ere just now was
the locksmith—'ow he did yell a1—a1—a1 !

SATINE

Klesshtsh?

LUKA

Yes " There's no work," 'e cries
" there's nothing ! "

SATINE

He'll get used to it * What shall I be
up to now?

LUKA.

(*Softly.*) See ! 'ere he comes !

(KLESSHTSH *comes in slowly, his head bowed.*)

SATINE

Hey, widower ! What do yer hang yer head for ? What are you pondering ?

KLESSHTSH

Thinkin' what shall I do ? I've got no tools all gone for the funeral !

SATINE

I'll give you some advice do nothing !
Simply dig up the world !

KLESSHTSH

That's what yer say I should be ashamed
before men

SATINE

Come off ! Men aren't ashamed to let you live worse than a dog Think now—you stop working, I don't work and a hundred more thousands—all I—d'yer see ? All chuck work ! No one will do anything—then what'll happen !

KLESSHTSH.

They'll all die of hunger !

LUKA.

(*To SATINE.*) If these are your notions, you ought to go to the "fugitives" . . . there's a people they call the "fugitives" . . .

SATINE

I know . . . they're no fools, ancient .

(*NATASHA is heard from KOSTOLOFF'S window crying out, "What for? Stop! What 'ave I done?"*)

LUKA.

(*Agitated*) Natasha! It was her cryin'—
Ah!

(*From the KOSTOLOFFS' apartment is heard noise, scuffling, the sound of broken crockery, and the shrill cry of KOSTOLOFF—"Ah! heretic! hag!"*)

VASSILISA

Wait a bit I'll teach her there,
there! . . .

NATASHA

Beating me killing me

SATINE

(*Shouts in at the window*) Hi! in there!

LUKA

(*In trepidation*) Vassili call 'im;
call Vaska . Oh, Lord! Brothers .
children!

THE ACTOR.

(*Running out*) Here, now. . . I'll find 'im
at once!

BOOBNOFF

It's nothin' uncommon, their beatin' 'er.

SATINE

Come on, old man . . . we'll act as witnesses!

LUKA.

(*Following SATINE*) I ain't no sort of a
witness! It's Vassili . . . quick and fetch
'im .

NATASHA

Sister . . . sister, dear! . . . Va—a—a . . .

BOOBNOFF

They've stopped 'er mouth—I'll go and
look

(*The noise in the KOSTOLOFFS' apartment
diminishes, seems to die away as if
they had gone out into the passage
The cry of an old man, heard:
"Stop!" The loud slam of a door,
which seems, as it were, with a hatchet,
to cut off all sound Quiet on the
stage. Evening twilight*)

KLESSHTSH

(*Seated on the sledge, rubs his hands firmly
together. Then begins to mutter something—*

at first indistinguishable, then)—'Ow, then? Must live. (*Aloud.*) Must have a roof . . . well? No roof . . . nothing! Man alone . . . alone—that's all. . . . No hope. .

(Slowly he goes out)

(A few seconds of ominous silence, then, somewhere in the passage, a volume of sound, chaos of cries It increases and approaches Individual voices are distinguishable)

VASSILISA

I'm her sister! Let me go

KOSTOLOFF

What right have you got——?

VASSILISA

Jail-bird!

SATINE

Call Vaska! quick—When—give it 'im!

(A police whistle)

(TARTAR runs in, his right hand bandaged.)

THE TARTAR.

'Ere's a pretty pass!—murder in broad daylight!

(Enter WHEN, followed by MYEDVYEDYEFF)

WHEN.

Ha ! I gave 'im one for 'imself !

MYEDVYEDYEFF.

You—you've been fighting, too ?

THE TARTAR.

And you ? Do yer own duty !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Feeling for his cord*) Here ! give up my whistle. .

(KOSTOLOFF *runs in*)

KOSTOLOFF

Abraham ! Stop 'im ! . Seize 'im ! . . .
It's murder !

(*From around the corner come KVASHNYA and NASTYA, supporting NATASHA, all dishevelled SATINE moves backwards towards the house, dragging VASSILISA, who is trying to get at her sister, ALYOSKA is leaping about her like a madman, whistling in her ears, shrieking, roaring Also other tattered persons—men and women*)

SATINE.

(*To VASSILISA*) ' Would you ? you damned owl ! . . .

VASSILISA.

Let go, you jail-bird ! I'll tear you to pieces. .

KVASHNYA

(*Taking away NATASHA*) Karpovna, leave off
aren't you ashamed ? Er you mad ?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Seizes SATINE*) Aha I've got yer !

SATINE.

When I flay 'em Vaska. Vaska

(*All are struggling in a mass near the passage, near the party wall They draw NATASHA away to the R., and set her down on the pile of wood*)

(*PEPEL rushes in and silently, with powerful movements, forces his way through them*)

PEPEL.

Where are you—Natasha ?

KOSTOLOFF

(*Getting behind the corner*) Abraham ! Seize Vaska ! brothers, help • us . take Vaska ! Robber ! footpad !

PEPEL.

You—you old goat ! *(Violently swinging round, he strikes the old man)*

(KOSTOLOFF falls so that only the upper part of his body is in sight PEPEL rushes to NATASHA)

VASSILISA

Beat Vaska ! Good people ! . beat the robber !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(Cries to SATINE) Let be this is a family matter ! They're relations . what er you ?

KVASHNYA

Look, look the savages ! They've scalded the child's poor feet

NASTYA

The samovar upset

THE TARTAR

Maybe an accident must 'ave the truth . mustn't talk wildly .

NATASHA

(Half fainting) Vassilisa . take me . . . save me . . .

VASSILISA.

Good folk ! look here ! look, see ! Dead !
Murdered !

*(All gather round KOSTOLOFF in the
passage BOOBNOFF comes out from
the throng, goes to PEPEL)*

BOOBNOFF

(Low) Vaska ! the old man ! It's done now !

PEPEL

(Looks at him, seems not to take it in) Go
and call take 'im to the hospital
leave me to deal with them !

BOOBNOFF

I say—the old man—some one's finished
'im.

*(The noise on the stage goes out like blaz-
ing wood extinguished by water Sepa-
rate half-whispered ejaculations. "Not
really?" "Done it this time!"
"Let's get out of it!" "Oh, the
devil!" "Some one's in for it!" The
crowd decreases)*

(BOOBNOFF and the TARTAR go off)

*(NASTYA and KVASHNYA rush to the body
of KOSTOLOFF.)*

VASSILISA.

(*Getting up from the ground, cries out triumphantly*) Killed 'im! my 'usband . . . there's 'is murderer! Vaska murdered 'im! I saw it! Good people—I saw it! . . . And now—Vaska?—the police!

PEPEL.

(*Coming from NATASHA*) Take 'er away!
(*Looks at the OLD MAN To VASSILISA*) Well? You're glad? (*Touches the body with his foot.*) Croaked the old dog! It's come your way. But can't I serve you the same? (*Rushes at her*)

(SATINE and WHEN pounce upon him—
VASSILISA rushes into the passage)

SATINE

Hold on!

WHEN.

Proo! Where are you jumping to?

VASSILISA

(*Reappearing*) What, Vaska, darling friend? You've got to go on trial Police! Abraham! Whistle!

MYEDVYEDYEFF

They tore it away, the devils! . . .

ALYOSHA

Here it is! (*He whistles* MYEDVYEDYEFF runs after him.)

SATINE.

Vaska, don't funk ! Manslaughter—that's all it is—that's nothing ! That doesn't cost you much. . . .

VASSILISA

Hold Vaska ! 'E killed 'im . . . I saw 'im !

SATINE

I gave 'im three good taps Can't have needed much ! Call me as a witness, Vaska. . .

PEPEL

I don't want to acquit myself What I want's to bring Vassilisa in . . . and I will bring 'er into it She wished for it . . . she 'as urged me to kill 'er 'usband 'as urged me to.

NATASHA

(Suddenly and loud) Ah !—I understand. . . So, Vassili ? Good people ! They are—at one ! My sister and—him they are at one ! They had arranged it all ! So, Vassili, that's why you talked to me to-night . . . so that she . . . might overhear it all ? Good people ! She is 'is lover . . . you know it . . . all know it . . . they are at one ! She . . . it was she got 'im to kill 'er 'usband . . . 'e was in their way . . . and I—was in their way. . . See 'ow they've mangled me. . . .

PEPEL.

Natalya ! What d'yer say . . . what d'yer say?

SATINE

The devil's in it all!

VASSILISA

You lie! She's lying! I . . . He,
Vaska's the murderer!

NATASHA

They are—at one! Curse you both! Both
of yer

SATINE

'Ere's a muddle ! Take care, Vassili. They'll sink yer between 'em !

WHEN

No understanding it What a world it is !

PEPEL.

Natalya! No, it can't be you do really?—you can't believe that me and her

SATINE

God's sake, Natasha, think what you're saying!

VASSILISA

(In the passage) They've killed my 'usband
 . . . Your worships . . . Vaska Pepel, a thief
 . . . he 'as killed him, Mr Inspector I
 —saw it, they all saw it .

NATASHA.

(*Her mind wandering.*) Good people . . . my sister and Vaska they're murderers! The police—you can 'ear them . . . it's she, it's my sister, she's urged him—persuaded him . . . her lover . . . there 'e is, the wretch . . . they are the murderers! Take them . . . judge. . . And take me to prison! For Christ's sake . . . let me go to prison! .

END OF THE THIRD ACT

THE FOURTH ACT

THE FOURTH ACT

SCENE —*Setting of First Act* PEPEL'S room is gone, the partition is broken, and in the place where KLESSHTSH sat there is no anvil

(*In the corner where PEPEL'S room was the TARTAR lies, moving and groaning from time to time Behind the table KLESSHTSH is seated, he is mending a concertina for a leak in the bellows At the other end of the table—SATINE, BARON, and NASTYA In front of them a bottle of vodka, three bottles of beer, a large hunk of black bread The ACTOR is turning about on the stove and coughing Night The scene is lighted by a lamp in the middle of the table Wind in the yard*)

KLESSHTSH

Y-yes during all of that shindy 'e
cleared out

THE BARON

Vanished before the police Just like
smoke dies before fire

SATINE

Just as evildoers flee the faces of the just !

NASTYA.

'E was good was the little old man ! . . . But
you're not men . . . you're mildew !

THE BARON

(*Drinks*) To your health, lady !

SATINE

An interesting old boy yes ! Nasturka
here—she's fallen in love with him

NASTYA

In love with 'im and dead in love with
'im ! 'Onest ! 'E saw everythin'
understood everythin'

SATINE

(*Smiling*) And on the whole he was
good for a lot of yer like slops are when
you've no teeth

THE BARON

(*Laughing*) Or a plaster on a boil

KLESSHTSH

'E 'ad pity you 'asn't no pity

SATINE

Does it help yer if I pity yer ?

KLESSHTSH

You--may it's not that you should 'ave
pity but it is that yer shouldn't give
offence

THE TARTAR.

(Sitting on the planks and nursing his damaged hand like a child) The old 'un was good
'ad the law in 'is soul ! 'Oo 'as the law in 'is
soul's good. Lose the law—and yer done for !

THE BARON

What law, Prince ?

THE TARTAR

Just . different ones you know
just .

THE BARON

What then ?

THE TARTAR

Don't offend people—there's the law !

SATINE

We call that “The code of punishments,
criminal and correctional ”

THE BARON

And, moreover—“an act for the regulation of
punishments to be inflicted by justices of the
peace ”

THE TARTAR

Koran tells your Koran ought to be yer
law. . The soul ought to be the Koran
Yes !

KLESSHTSH.

(*Testing concertina*) Wheezes, wheezes, damn
it ! but the Prince 'e says right . must
live—by the law by the gospel .

SATINE

Live it . .

THE BARON

Try it

THE TARTAR

Mahomet gave the Koran , 'e said 'Ere's—the
law ! Do as it's written there Then in course
of time—the Koran's not enough time gives
its own law, a new law Each time gives
its own law

SATINE

Just so Time went by and gave " a code
of punishments " . A strong law you
won't soon get rid of it

NASTYA

(*Bangs her glass on the table*) And what
for . why do I live here with you? I'll go
away . go off to some place to the end
of the world !

THE BARON

In your slippers, lady?

NASTYA

Naked ! On all fours !

THE BARON.

Quite a picture, lady . . . if on all fours. . .

NASTYA.

Yes, I'll crawl ! If it's only not to have to
look at your mug Ah, 'ow it all revolts me !
All life all people !

SATINE.

Go on, and take the Actor with yer 'e's
off on some goose chase he's learned that,
at exactly half a verst from the end of the world,
there's a 'ospital for organons

THE ACTOR

(*Getting up from the stove*) Or-ga-nisms—
yer fool !

SATINE

For organons poisoned with alcohol .

THE ACTOR

Yes, he'll go ! he'll go ! just see !

THE BARON

He—who, monsieur ?

THE ACTOR

I !

THE BARON

Merci, servant of the Goddess what's 'er
name ? The Goddess of plays, of tragedy .
what on earth's she called ?

THE ACTOR

The Muse, idiot ! Not a Goddess—but—a
Muse !

SATINE

Hera Aphrodite Atropos to
'ell with em ! It's all the old man that's
screwed it into the Actor d'yer see, Baron ?

THE BARON

The old 'un's—an ass

THE ACTOR

Clods ! Goths ! Mel-po-me-ne ! Heart-
less creature, you shall see—he'll go ! “ Get ye
hence, ye dismal spirits ” verses of Béranger
yes ! He'll find 'im a place where there's
no no

THE BARON

No, anything, monsieur !

THE ACTOR

Yes ! Nothing ! “ That ditch shall be my
tomb, sick and exhausted I die ” Why do
you live ? Why ?

THE BARON

You ! “ Kean or genius and excess ” don't
bellow !

THE ACTOR

You lie ! I will bellow !

NASTYA

(Looking up from the table, wrings her hands)

Shriek ! Let 'em listen !

THE BARON

I don't quite take you, lady !

SATINE

Quiet, Baron ! Oh, 'ell ! Let 'em shout
 split their own ears let 'em ! That's
sense, too Don't 'inder folk, as the old
man put it yes, yer know, that old bird
he's just turned all our people's heads

KLESSHTSH

'E pointed 'em some place , and then—
never showed 'em the way

THE BARON

The old 'un was a humbug

NASTYA

You lie ! You're a 'umbug yerself !

THE BARON

Silence, lady !

KLESSHTSH

•

The truth 'e didn't like it, the old 'un

didn't. 'E stood firm against the truth . . . and right 'e was ! Yes—where's there truth 'ere ? But without it—yer can't breathe . . . Look at the Prince there . . . 'e's spoiled 'is 'and workin' . . . 'e'll 'ave to 'ave 'is 'and sawed off, see now . . . and there's some of yer truth !

SATINE

(*Striking his hand on the table*) Silence ! You're all of yer—cattle ! Boys—shut up about the old man ! (*Calmer*) You, Baron—are the worst of all ! Not a thing do yer understand and—yer lie ! The old 'un's no hum-bug ! What is—the truth ? Man—there's the truth ! He understood that you—don't ! You're—as dead as bricks I understand the old man yes He lied but out of pity fer you, devil take yer ! There's lots of people that lie out of pity for their neighbours

I—know ! I've read ! Beautifully, inspiredly, affectingly they lie ! There's the consoling lie, the preceptive lie the lie to justify the burden that crushes the hand of the labourer to lay blame on the starving. I —know about lies ! The weak of spirit and them that live on the sap of others—it's them that need lying . . . some it supports, and others—it screens But him—that's his own master . . . who don't depend on others and don't feed on others why should he lie ? Lying's the religion of slaves and masters Truth's the God of the free man !

THE BARON.

Bravo ! Finely spoken ! I—agree ! You talk
—like a decent man !

SATINE

Shan't a rogue sometimes speak the truth,
when decent folk so often talk like rogues ?
I've forgotten a lot, but—I shall know something !
The old 'un ! He had brains He
worked on me like acid does on a dirty old coin
Let's drink to his health ! Fill up

(NASTYA pours out a glass of beer and gives
it to SATINE He laughs)

SATINE

The old man lives his own way looks at
everything through his own eyes Once I asked
him “Daddy ! why are men alive ?”

(Trying to speak in LUKA'S voice and to
imitate his demeanour)

“Why—they live for the better man, dearie !
Now, let's say, there's carpenters and the rest—
masses—people And then out of them a
carpenter's born a carpenter such as never
was in all the world above 'em all never
was his like fer carpent'ring 'E stamps 'imself
on the whole carpent'ring trade shoves the
whole thing twenty years forward. . . And so
for all the others . . . Locksmiths then .
bootmakers and other working folk . . . and all
the agriculturals . . . and even the gentry—they

live for the better man ! Each thinks 'e's livin' fer 'imself, yet it turns out it's for that better man. A 'undred years and maybe longer, we 'as to go on livin' till the better man ! "

(NASTYA looks fixedly into SATINE's face
KLESSHTSH stops working at the concertina, and also listens The BARON, with his head lowered, drums with his fingers softly on the table ACTOR has got off the stove)

SATINE

" All, dearie boy, all in their way live for the better man ! Therefore you must show respect unto all it's clear we can't know who 'e is, why 'e was born, and what 'e can do 'e may have been born for our 'appiness to bring us 'elp And the most of all that we must respect children the little bits of mites ! For the little children—there must be no cramping ! Never interfere with the children respect the mites ! " (Pause)

THE BARON

(Thoughtfully) M-yes For the better man? So it was in our family an old family of Catherine's time Noblemen originally French In the service rose and rose Under Nicholas, my grandfather, Gustave Debille, held a high post Riches Hundreds of serfs horses . . . cooks

NASTYA

Lies ! 'E never did !

THE BARON

(*Leaping up*) What ? Well and after !

NASTYA

'E never did !

THE BARON

(*Shouts out*) A house in Moscow ! A house
in Petersburg ! Carriages with coats-of-
arms

(*KLESSHTSH takes the concertina, gets up,
and goes to one side, from where he
watches the scene*)

NASTYA

Never 'ad !

THE BARON

Silence ! I say ten footmen !

NASTYA

(*With exultation*) N-never 'ad !

THE BARON

I'll kill you !

NASTYA

(*Preparing to run*) There was no carriages !

SATINE

Stop, Nasturka ! Don't rile 'im

THE BARON.

Just wait, yer spawn ! My grandfather . .

NASTYA

'Ad no gran'father ! 'Ad nothin' !

(SATINE *laughs*)

THE BARON

(*Worn out with rage sits on the bench*)
Satine, tell 'er the slut You, too
. you're laughing ! You too—don't
believe me ? (*Cries in despair, pounding his fists*
on the table) It's true, damn you all !

NASTYA

(*Triumphant*) A-ah, got 'im D'yer know
now 'ow it is when people won't believe yer ?

KLESSHTSH

(*Returning to table*) I thought there'd be a
fight

THE TARTAR

Ah ! Silly folk ! Very bad !

THE BARON

I won't let myself be jeered at. I've
got proofs, documents, damn it !

SATINE

Stole them ! And forget about your uncle's
carriages in a carriage that was you can't
go anywhere.

THE BARON

That she should dare, anyhow !

NASTYA

D'yer hear 'im? Should dare !

SATINE

'E's only laughing ! How's she any worse than you? Though in her past we'll take it that she's had no carriages and—grandfathers, or even a father and mother

THE BARON

(*Growing calmer*) Devil take yer !
you're able to judge things coolly
But it seems time I've no strength of
character

SATINE

Get some ! It's of use (Pause)
Nastya, er yer going to the hospital?

NASTYA

Why?

SATINE

To Natasha

NASTYA.

What er yer thinking of? Been out long since
. came out and—disappeared ! No findin'
'er. . . .

SATINE.

That's to say—she's a goner.

KLESSHTSH

It's interestin' to see who's goin' to floor which?
Vaska—Vassilisa, or she him?

NASTYA

Vassilisa'll win! She's cunning But Vaska
—he'll go to penal servitude

SATINE

For manslaughter—only to prison .

NASTYA

Pity You're better off—in penal servitude
. That's where yer ought all to be in
penal servitude all mixed up together
all mixed up like rubbish in the
dust-hole

SATINE

(*Astonished*) What are you saying? Are
you mad?

THE BARON

Now I'm just going to give her one for
her insults!

NASTYA

Try it! Touch me!

THE BARON

I'll try it!

SATINE.

Let be ! Don't touch her . . . give no offence to folk ! I can't get him out of my head—that old man ! (*Laughs*) Give no offence to folk, and if a man does me an offence—what I call a life-long offence—what then ? Forgive ? Nothing ! No matter !

THE BARON

(*To NASTYA*) You ought to know that I'm—I'm on a different level to you ! You . . . muck !

NASTYA

Ah, you poor wretch ! Why you . . . you live on me like a worm does in a little apple !

(*Laughter of the men*)

KLESSHTSH

You . . . stupid ! A little apple !

THE BARON

You can't . . . be angry . . . she's such an idiot !

NASTYA

Laughing ? That's a lie too ! You don't find it funny !

THE ACTOR

(*Gloomily*) Thrash 'em !

NASTYA.

If only I . . could ! I'd give yer .

*(Takes cup from table and throws it on
the ground)*

that's 'ow !

THE TARTAR

Why break the crockery? La yer
ninny !

THE BARON

(Getting up) No, now I'm goin' to
teach her manners

NASTYA

(Running away) Go to the devil !

SATINE

(After her) Here ! Stop ! What are you
running for ?

NASTYA

Wolves ! may yer choke ! yer wolves !

THE ACTOR

(Gloomily) Amen

THE TARTAR.

O-o She's a bad woman—the Russian
woman ! Scolding wilful ! Not the Tartar woman
—the Tartar woman knows the law !

KLESSHTSH

Give 'er a shaking

THE BARON

The huzzy !

KLESSHTSH

(*Trying the concertina*) Finished ! But 'er
master didn't come for 'er 'E's on the
loose

SATINE

Come on—drink !

KLESSHTSH

Thanks ! Bedtime soon

SATINE

Are you getting used to us ?

KLESSHTSH

(*Having had a drink, goes over to the corner
where his planks are*) It's all right
Everywhere—there's men at first—yer don't
see that then—you look round, you find
that they're all men it's all right !

(*The TARTAR spreads something on his
planks, goes on his knees, and prays*)

THE BARON

(*Pointing the TARTAR out to SATINE*) Look !

SATINE.

Stop ! He's a good chap . . . Let him alone ! (*Laughs*) I to-day—am good . Devil knows why !

THE BARON

You're always good when you're drunk—and clever

SATINE

When I'm drunk I like everything Yes
He—prays ? Fine ! A man can believe or
not believe . that's his affair ! A man is
free . he pays for everything himself ! .
for belief, for unbelief, for love, for wisdom A
man pays everything himself, and therefore is—
free ! The man—that's the truth ! What
is man ? It's not you, not me, not them—
no ! It's you, I, them, the old 'un, Napoleon,
Mahomet in one ! (*Draws in the air the
face of a man with his finger*) D'yer see ?
That's prodigious ! In that is the beginning and
end of all All is—in man, all for man ! There
exists only man, all the rest—is the work of his
hands and of his brains ! Man ! That's mag-
nificent ! That sounds mighty Mankind !
You must respect mankind ! Not pity him
not lower him with pity must respect him !
Let's drink to Mankind ! Baron ! (*Gets up*)
It's good—to feel yourself a man ! I'm a ticket-
of-leave, a murderer, a scoundrel—yes, I am !
When I walk the streets people eye me for a

crook . . . and they draw away, and they glare after me, and they often say to me, "Loafer ! black-guard ! work ! work !" Why ! To fill my belly ? (*Laughs*) I've always despised people who worry too much about stuffing themselves It isn't that, Baron ? That isn't it Man is higher than that Man is higher than repletion !

THE BARON

(*Nodding his head*) You're getting at it
 that's prime that's the thing to warm
 one's heart I haven't got that I don't
 know how ! (*Looks round—then softly, cau-*
tiously) I, brother, I'm afraid sometimes
 D'you see ? Get in a funk because—what
 after ?

SATINE

Rubbish ! There's nothing that a man should fear ?

THE BARON

Yer know from when first I can remem-
 ber there's been inside my noddle a sort
 of fog Never anything have I understood I'm
 . . in some way—I'm clumsy It seems to
 me all my life I've done nothing but dress up
 and why ? Went to school—wore the uni-
 form of the Institute for the Sons of the Nobility
 . . but what did I learn ? Don't remember
 . . Married—in a frock-coat, and an over-
 coat but I picked out the wrong wife and—
 why ? Don't understand . Squandered all I

had, wore some sort of a grey pea-jacket and red trousers but where did it all get to? Never noticed Entered the Court of Exchequer uniform, and a cap with a cockade made away with some Government money—they put me into the convict's gown then—I got into this lot here And all like in a dream ah? That's funny

SATINE

Not very I should say—stupid. . .

THE BARON

Yes and I think it's stupid But I must have been born for some reason Eh?

SATINE

(*Smiling*) Probably Man is born for the better man! (*Shaking his head*) So it's all right!

THE BARON

That Nastya! Where's she run off to? I'll go, and see where she is? For after all she

(*Goes out A pause*)

THE ACTOR

Tartar! (*Pause*) Prince!

(*The TARTAR turns his head*)

THE ACTOR.

For me . . . pray

THE TARTAR.

Why?

THE ACTOR

Pray for me

THE TARTAR

(*After a silence*) Pray yerself !

THE ACTOR.

(*Gets quickly from the stove, goes to the table, pours himself some vodka with trembling hands, drinks, and almost runs into the passage*) I'm off !

SATINE

Hi, you, off where ?

(*Enter MYEDVYEDYEFF in a wadded woman's jacket, and BOOBNOFF, both drunk, but not very drunk In one hand BOOBNOFF is carrying a packet of cracknels, he has a bottle of vodka in one armpit, and another sticking out of the pocket of his pea-jacket*)

MYEDVYEDYEFF

A camel—it's a kind of a donkey ! Only with no ears .

BOOBNOFF

Chuck it ! Yerself—yer a kind of a donkey

MYEDVYEDYEFF

A camel, it hasn't got no ears at all .
it—hears with its nostrils .

BOOBNOFF

(To SATINE) Chum ! I've been looking for
yer in all the trakteers—all the stills ! Take
the bottle, all my 'ands is full !

SATINE

You—put the cracknels on the table, then you'll
have one hand free

BOOBNOFF

True ! You're right Jumble, look at it
all ! So there, eh? Wire boy

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Sharpers they're all clever . I
know ! They 'ave got to be clever A good
man he—may be stupid and good, but a wrong
'un, 'e's bound to 'ave wits But, about the camel,
yer know yer can get me up on 'im
'e 'asn't no 'orns, not no teeth

BOOBNOFF

Where's every one? Why's there no one 'ere?
'Ere, get up it's my treat !

SATINE

You'll soon drink all *you've* got, blockhead !

BOOBNOFF

Soon, yer say? This time I've gathered some capital—a little pile When! Where's When?

KLESSHTSH

(*Going to table*) Not here

BOOBNOFF

Ooo-r-r! Yer peacock! Don't bark, don't growl! Drink, be jolly, don't turn yer nose up
I treats everybody! Why, mates, I loves to stand treat! If I was rich . I'd
I'd build a free trakteer! Yes, my God! With music, and a troupe of singers Come, drink, eat, listen to the singers gladden yer 'earts A man's a sad creature come along to me to my free trakteer! Satine! For you you 'ere, take 'alf of all my capital! This way!

SATINE

Give it me all in a lump!

BOOBNOFF

The 'ole capital? At once? Right! Then here's a rouble and here's a twenty kopyeks a five kopyeks a two kopyeks all .

SATINE

That'll do! It's safer with me I'll play cards with it!

MYEDVYEDYEFF

I am—a witness the money is placed in
your keepin' 'ow much is it?

BOOBNOFF

You? You're a camel we want no wit-
nesses

ALYOSHKHA

(*Comes in barefooted*) Fellows ! my feet are
soaking

BOOBNOFF

Go and soak yourself only all over ! I
like you You sing and you play that's
very good ! But, drinking—that's a poor game !
That does 'arm, brother , drinking does 'arm !

ALYOSHKHA

Why, I look at yer ! And it's only when yer
drunk yer anythin' like a man Klesshtsh !
My concertina—mended ? (*Dances, and sings*)

*If my nozzle weren't so bonny,
Then my gossip wouldn't love me*

I'm frozen, fellows ! Cold !

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Um If one wa's to ask 'Oo is that
gossip?

BOOBNOFF

Keep still You're no one now, brother
You're no "bobby" in these days . you're
done with ! No "bobby" nor no uncle

ALYOSHA

You're just—auntie's darling hubby !

BOOBNOFF

One of yer nieces is—in gaol, the other's
dyn'—

MYEDVYEDVEFF

(*Proudly*) Yer lie ! She's not dyn' she's
disappeared without tellin' no one !

(*SATINE laughs*)

BOOBNOFF

All the same, brother ! A man with no niece—
'e's not an uncle !

ALYOSHA

Your Excellency ! The retired drum-major !

*My gossip—has 'er savings,
And I've not got a penny'
Oh, aren't I a merry boy?
Oh, I am so good'*

It's cold !

(*WHEN enters, then—until the end of the
act—some other male and female
figures They undress, get on to the
planks, snore*)

WHEN

Boobnoff? What made yer 'ook it?

BOOBNOFF

Come 'ere! Sit down let's sing, mate!
My beloved eh?

THE TARTAR

In the night yer must sleep! Sing songs in
the day!

SATINE

That's all right, Prince You—come here!

THE TARTAR

How—all right? There'll be a noise
When there's singing, it means a noise

BOOBNOFF.

(*Going to him*) Prince! 'ow's—yer 'and?
'Ave they cut it off?

WHEN

Means the gutter for you, Hassan! Without
a hand—what er yer good for? A man's valued
by 'is 'ands and 'is back No hand—no
man! Go and drink! Nothing like it!

(*KVASHNYA comes in*)

KVASHNYA

Ah, my dear good people! Out in the yard, out
in the yard! The cold, the slush—is my man
here? Mannie!

MYEDVYEDYEFF

Me?

KVASHNYA

Got on my jacket again and it seems
to me a bit on, ah? What d'yer mean
by it?

MYEDVYEDYEFF

On account of the birthday Boobnoff
and—the cold the slush!

KVASHNYA.

Look at me the slush! No foolery
Come to bed

MYEDVYEDYEFF

(*Going into the kitchen*) Sleep, yes I
will I want to it's time!

(*Exit*)

SATINE

Why are yer so beastly strict with him?

KVASHNYA

It's the only way, my friend A man like
'im 'as got to be kept strict We keep 'ouse
together, now, I thought 'e would be a 'elp to
me seen' as 'e's 'ad discipline, but you—
you're a disorderly crew . I've got my

woman's view let 'im go gettin' drunk
That don't suit my book !

SATINE.

You've chosen your help wrong

KVASHNYA

No—better than you you'd never live
with me a fellow like you ! I'd see yer
one week in twenty you'd gamble away me
and my very insides !

SATINE

(*Laughs*) That's true, my girl ! I
would

KVASHNYA

So now ! Alyoshka !

ALYOSHKA

Yes—here am I !

KVASHNYA

What's this you've been saying about me ?

ALYOSHKA

I ? No 'arm I've said, there, I've said, there's
a woman ! Wonderful woman ! Flesh, fat bones
—good forty stone, and brains—not a ha'porth !

KVASHNYA

And there you're wrong ! I've got a deal of brains No, and why did yer say that I beat my man ?

ALYOSHKA

I thought that was beatin' 'im when you seized 'old of 'is 'air

KVASHNYA

(*Smiling*) Fool ! Then just you don't see ! Why do you carry tales out of school ? And yer 'urt 'is feelin's too It's cause of your talk 'e's took to drinkin'

ALYOSHKA

Then the sayin's true, then, even a bear likes drink !

(*KLESSHTSH and SATINE laugh*)

KVASHNYA

You're a pretty sort of man, you are, Alyoshka !

ALYOSHKA

I'm the very first superfine sort of man for any job ! I just go where my eyes lead me !

BOOBNOFF

(*By the TARTAR'S planks*) Come along ! It's no use they'll not let us sleep ! Come and drink the night through, When !

WHEN.

Drink? Why not .

ALYOSHKKA

And I'll play to yer !

SATINE

Let's 'ear yer !

THE TARTAR

Well, Boobnoff, yer devil—fetch the wine !
We'll drink, we'll rollick—death comes
we've got to die !

BOOBNOFF

Pour 'im out, Satine ! When, squat ! Ah,
pals ! Does a man want much ? I've drunk a
bit and—happy ! When ! Strike me lad !
I'll sing I'll pay !

WHEN

(Sings)

The sun it rises and it sets

BOOBNOFF

(Going on)

In my prison all is dark'

(The door is opened suddenly BARON on
the threshold)

THE BARON

Hi . you ! Go . go over there ! On
the waste out there the Actor .
he's hanged himself !

*(Silence All look at the BARON NASTYA
appears behind his back, and slowly,
with wide-opened eyes, goes over to
the table)*

SATINE

(In a low voice) Ah he's spoiled the
song the fool !

THE END

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